

## **PHOTO CONTEST TIPS**

How to take winning shots for *Countryfile*'s calendar

#### **WILD CAT COMEBACK**

Should lynx be released into UK woodlands?

# COUNTRYFIE Wainwright's LAKE DISTRICT

Celebrate 60 years of the great wanderer's favourite fells and dales

# **DREAMY GARDENS**

Rose-filled country havens for a blissful summer's day

# HARDY COUNTRY Explore the seductive world of Far From the Madding Crowd

#### Glow worms

Where to spot one of summer's natural wonders



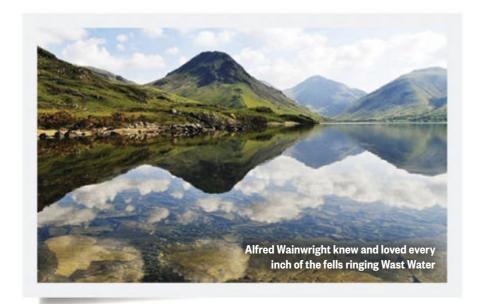
# Roaming in the gloaming

12 ways to make the most of long June evenings



Official fuel consumption figures for the Subaru Forester range in mpg (l/100km): Urban from 25.2 (11.20) to 39.8 (7.10) to Extra Urban from 40.4 (7.00) to 57.6 (4.90) to Combined from 33.2 (8.50) to 49.6 (5.70), CO<sub>2</sub> 197 to 148. MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown Forester XT. <sup>†</sup>For built-in peace of mind, every vehicle (excluding WRX STI) marketed by Subaru (UK) Ltd is covered

by a 5 Year/100,000 mile (whichever is sooner) Limited Warranty. For general terms and conditions visit **www.subaru.co.uk** 



# Hardy and 'AW'...



Two men who were brilliant at conveying the power of the English landscape dominate this issue. But Alfred Wainwright (known as 'AW') and Thomas Hardy couldn't be more different. Hardy used landscape as an extra – often forbidding – character in his books. In his hands, the coombes, downs and heaths of Wessex are places of both jeopardy and joy and are just as influential

as his human characters in driving the plot, as our own Maria Hodson found while exploring the key sites that inspired his most romantic novel, *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Read her guide to Hardy country on **page 64.** 

Wainwright could be said to be the opposite of Hardy – he was drawn to the wild and rugged and his books are a delightful invitation to walk with him through country that in Hardy's time might be dismissed as wasteland. How things change. Appropriately, we sent the winner of the inaugural Wainwright prize for travel and nature writing Hugh Thomson to explore Wainwright's heartland – the Lake District's Western Fells that captivated the great man beyond all else. Walk with Hugh in AW's footsteps on **page 18**.

As summer arrives, it's frustrating to be chained to a desk on a warm June day with all that countryside crying out to be explored. So we've gathered some heartening ideas for enjoying evenings outdoors after work. From spotting glow worms (**p50**) to listening to nightjars (**p71 onwards**), let's make the most of the long days and go roaming in the gloaming this month!

Fergus Collins, editor@countryfile.com

# HOW TO CONTACT US

#### Talk to the editorial team:

Tel: 0117 314 7399

Email: editor@countryfile.com
Post: BBC Countryfile Magazine, Tower
House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN

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Tel: 0844 844 0256

**Email:** countryfile@servicehelpline.co.uk **Post:** Countryfile Magazine, FREEPOST LON, 16059, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8DF

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#### THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



#### **Hugh Thomson**

"I have walked all over the world but there is something so perfectly to a human scale here," says Hugh of Wainwright's Lake District, **page 18** 



#### Pete Dommet

"What strikes me is how incredibly bright they are," says Pete after a twilight ramble in Somerset in search of glow worms, **page 50** 



#### Maria Hodson

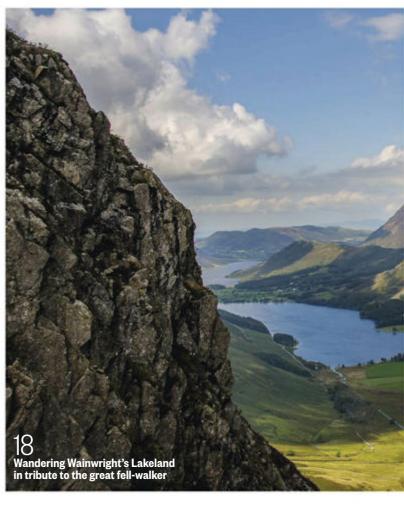
"To Hardy, a connection with the natural world is paramount," says Maria as she explores the land of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, **page 64** 

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#### **APPLEBY HORSE FAIR**

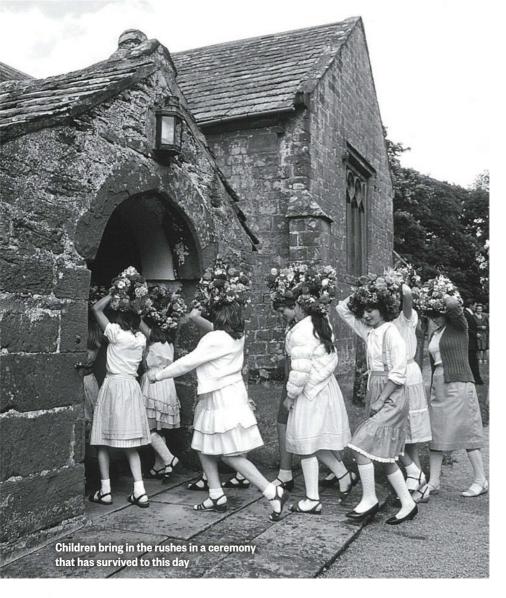
The Cumbrian town of Appleby is transformed during the first weekend of June by up to 40,000 visitors, who head there for its famous annual horse fair – one of the longest running in the country. Gypsies and travellers from around the country flock to the traditional gathering, which has the colourful atmosphere of a big family get-together. Many bring their horses, which are washed in the river before spectators and paraded up and down the streets.

#### **HONEYSUCKLE**

The scent of summer. This easy-growing, popular plant (*Lonicera*) flowers in summer, its heady perfume more potent in the evenings to better attract passing moths that may pollinate it. It's found in hedgerows as well as gardens, preferring some shade and a supporting wall or fence to climb. The flowers mature from pinkish-white to a more yellow tinge, ready for pollination, eventually bearing round red berries that songbirds love.

We want to see your snaps
Send your countryside images to
photos@countryfile.com or the address on page 3





Heritage

# WARCOP RUSHBEARING

Watch locals take part in a charming Cumbrian tradition on 29 June

Once upon a time, rushes were strewn over the earth floors of churches to sweeten the air (the dead were often buried in the churches themselves) and provide some layers of insulation for the parishioners in what have always been chilly buildings. Such 'rush-bearing' events died out after most churches were floored in stone in the late 19th century. In Cumbria, however, the tradition survives - but in a slightly different form. Today children carry crosses made of rushes and flowers in a colourful procession through the village led by a band and clergy. St Columba's Church in Warcop is one of five Cumbrian churches to keep up the tradition in the 21st century.

#### the month to pick

# PEAS AND JOY

Embrace the tiny emerald of delight by Genevieve Taylor

If I had to choose a single vegetable to take to my desert island, the humble pea would surely be it; sweet, nutritious and economical, peas tick so many boxes. As great as frozen peas are, homegrown peas, picked and eaten straight from the pod, are in another taste league altogether and certainly a crop worth finding a little space in your garden for if at all possible. I could fill my whole plot full of pea plants and it still wouldn't be enough for my kitchen, but I always make sure I plant just a few rows to ripen in the early summer. They need very minimal cooking - just add them for the last few minutes of your recipe. Fresh herbs such as parsley, mint and dill are natural partners for peas, and they work brilliantly in all manner of fish, chicken or lamb dishes as well as risottos and all sorts of pasta sauces, particularly cream-based ones. They are also great whole in soups try them in the healthy summer pea and bean recipe at www.countryfile.com.



tos: David Jones, Alamy, FLPA

#### ID guide

#### FOUR TO SPOT: DRAGONS AND DAMSELS

Lakes, ponds and rivers are bristling with glistening fairies dragonflies. Here are four of the main types to admire this summer... By Richard Jones



#### **HAWKERS**

Hawkers, such as the emperor dragonfly, are among our largest insects. Wings span 105mm and are held at right angles to the 80mm blue, green or yellow-marked body when at rest – though they rarely settle.



#### **DARTERS**

Darters are smaller, with a 65mm wingspan and a narrow 45mm red or yellow body. Wings are held out sideways when at rest, but darters perch, tail out or up, rather than hang, on a prominent stem.



#### **DAMSELFLIES**

Damselflies rest with their delicate narrow wings folded alongside their pin-thin bodies, which are 35mm, black, and marked with red, powder blue or green. Secret flittering flight, staying tight to the waterside.



#### **DEMOISELLES**

Demoiselleflies bridge the gap. Their large dusky or blotched wings span to 60mm, held over a 45mm brilliant metallic blue or green body. They fly, butterfly-like, along streams and slow-moving rivers.

#### Did you know?



#### Swifts can barely walk

They only use their legs to waddle in and out of their nests. As you'll notice this month, they spend almost all of their lives in the air - including sleeping and mating - only coming to earth to nest. This exhausting aerial life requires a streamlined body so the short stubby legs are far back and easily tucked in, like a jet fighter drawing up its landing gear.







# How does your garden GROW?

GROW London, which runs from 19-21 June on Hampstead Heath, brings the best of the countryside to London and presents a wide range of plants, furniture and accessories for the urban gardener. Some of the UK's top nurseries will be bringing a tempting selection of rare and unusual plants. For visitors who want to make the most of their outdoor space

- whether it's a garden, a patio, a balcony or a window box - GROW London brings together companies making some of the best and most unusual garden furniture, pots, planters, sculptures and tools. There's a strong vintage theme too this year for those who want to enhance the texture and character of their garden with classic and original pieces.



# **Adam Henson**

THE COUNTRY'S FAVOURITE FARMER GIVES US HIS MONTHLY GUIDE TO AGRICULTURE IN BRITAIN

#### FARM MACHINERY - WHAT'S WHAT?

hroughout the British countryside, tractors are a familiar sight at any time of year. Just a glimpse of one sums up UK agriculture in an instant and they really are the workhorse of the industry - an ironic description considering that the mechanisation of farming in the 1930s and 40s saw the tractor replace working horses almost everywhere. In fact, we still measure an engine's performance in terms of horsepower. It's widely thought that the steam engine pioneer James Watt devised the comparison between animals and machines when he studied the amount of power that draft horses used for lifting and pulling. But while the tractor might be familiar to everyone, the machinery and equipment that is used with them is more of a mystery. After all, a tractor on its own can't do a great deal. So here's my handy guide to the things you will see being pulled behind tractors in the fields of Britain.



#### **PLOUGH**

One of the oldest implements on the farm with a history going back 4,000 years, ploughs have long been used for sowing, planting and turning the soil. The basic design of a blade at the end of a beam hasn't changed much over the centuries. But modern reversible versions have ploughs placed back to back and can be turned over hydraulically at the end of a furrow, ready for the return run. While one row is working the ground, the other sits upside down in the air. It means the furrows are all turned the same way, ensuring an evenly ploughed field.



#### **HARROW**

If you spot what looks like a row of wheels attached to a low arm behind the tractor, that will be a disc harrow. It's designed to break up the soil and disturb weed seeds. Once they sprout and make their presence known, they can be sprayed and stopped from growing and taking hold. It's a great cultivation tool with blades arranged in sets; the deeper the blade's angle, the deeper it bites.



#### **SLURRY TANKER**

A large barrel-like contraption being taken across a field will almost certainly be spraying slurry. It's an environmentally friendly way to deal with animal waste and helps increase grass yields. Liquid manure and waste water is pumped into a reservoir or slurry lagoon and later it's applied to the land. The latest models feature ground-level pipes for accurate distribution.



#### **SEED DRILL**

When the time arrives to sow the seed, an automatic seed drill does the job brilliantly. Once the soil has been fertilised and cultivated, the seed is put into a hopper and delivered across the width of the machine automatically to a network of tubes, which sit side by side. It can place seed with pin-point accuracy and at pre-set intervals to make sure there is an evenly spaced crop.



#### **SPRAYER**

Huge booms either side of the tractor that resemble aircraft wings mean that spraying is underway. To help control weeds, insect infestations and disease, farmers can use approved agricultural chemicals, if the conditions are right. UK spraying regulations are very strict, so the safe and efficient way to do it is by using an electronically monitored sprayer.

Ask Adam: What topic would you like to know more about? Email your suggestions to editor@countryfile.com





# Weather

with John Hammond

Summer's here! 18 hours of daylight tell us so and, like a clock hand, we creep towards the solstice. In the countryside, the sap is rising. Nature is sucking in the vital mix of heat and moisture and urgently converting it into abundant growth and colour. The greens are just that bit greener than at any other time.

In some years, high pressure traps air near the sun-baked ground, enabling heat to build relentlessly day by day. By the end of June 1976, such a pressure-cooker enabled temperatures to reach 36°Celsius in southern England - the highest June temperature on record.

But June is not always a reliable guide to the summer that follows. It's a volatile month. When pressure is lower, the ground can issue bubbles of thermal energy skyward through the still-cool vapours aloft that waft in from across the sea. This unstable concoction can explode vividly into thundery cloudbursts, sending torrents of water back down to earth.

A year before the 'record-breaker', June 1975 was another extraordinary month. On the 2nd, a chill northerly wind brought the latest snowfall in recent recorded history, and led at least one county cricket game to be snowed off. Yet, such a freak of nature was bound not to last. Within a week, it was warm and sunny, and a fine summer ensued. Time to make hay while the sun shines, because at least one meteorologist has little idea what July might serve up.



Watch weatherman John Hammond on BBC News and Countryfile.



wildlife spectacle of the month

# EACH FOR THE SKY

Jump on a boat or head to these coastal hotspots to see dolphins in action this summer

Whales and dolphins can be seen from any coast, from southeast England to the northern tip of Scotland, but there are a number of hotspots where cetaceans are seen regularly - particularly dolphins, which tend to be more sedentary than their larger cousins. Sometimes you might be able to glimpse surfacing dolphins from the shore, though dedicated boat trips led by experts are more likely to yield utterly memorable encounters.

#### Where to see them

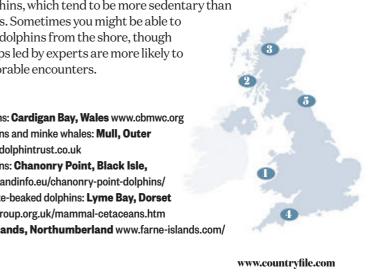
Bottlenose dolphins: Cardigan Bay, Wales www.cbmwc.org

2 Bottlenose dolphins and minke whales: Mull, Outer Hebrides www.whaledolphintrust.co.uk

Bottlenose dolphins: Chanonry Point, Black Isle, Highlands www.scotlandinfo.eu/chanonry-point-dolphins/

Common and white-beaked dolphins: Lyme Bay, Dorset www.dorsetmammalgroup.org.uk/mammal-cetaceans.htm

Various: Farne Islands, Northumberland www.farne-islands.com/



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#### **MEASURE THE HEIGHT OF A TREE**

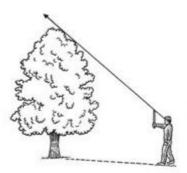
If you're curious about a tree's height, here's how to find out...



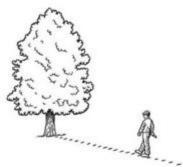
Before you start, take a moment to measure your typical stride length – roughly from heel of back foot to toe of front foot.



Find a stick the length of your arm. Hold your arm out straight with the stick pointing up at a 90° angle to your arm.



Walk backwards until the top of the stick lines up with the top of the tree. You are roughly the same distance away as its height.



Walk back to the tree counting your strides. Multiply this number by the length of your stride to work out how tall the tree is.

#### three to spot

#### THE WALKERS' STILE GUIDE by lan Vince

Stiles are so ubiquitous we hardly notice them, but with over 140,000 miles of footpath in England and Wales alone, there are countless instances where compromises between the stock control needs of the farmer and our rights of way have to be reached.



#### **WOODEN**

The traditional one- or two-step design of the kind we may find anywhere in Britain, the wooden stile (like all stiles) can represent rather a menace to wheelchair and pushchair users who would naturally prefer a gate or a gap. A more problematic variation is the ladder stile, often used in upland areas to straddle high stone walls.



#### **STONE STEP**

An uplands speciality, stone step stiles can be as complex as the miniature staircases that resemble a pair of horse mounting blocks or as ingenious as the cantilevered slabs that jut out from the dry stone walls of the Lake District, North Wales and the Pennines, the latter forming pleasingly ragged ladders up and over the field wall.



#### **SQUEEZE STILE**

A different spin on the idea of a restricted entrance, the squeeze stile – particularly common in the Peak District – positions upright stones around 25cm apart in a gap in the field wall. This creates a pinch point narrow enough to stop livestock passing through. Wooden versions may be found in the southern chalk downs.

#### Q&A:

#### "What should I do if I find a bat roost?"

Bats and their roosts are protected by law. This means if work needs to be done to any building that is known to or may contain a bat roost, the relevant organisation (SNCO) must be contacted in advance for advice. If bats are found during work then it must stop immediately. Call the National Bat Helpline on 0345 1300 228.

Courtesy of The Bat Conservation Trust, www.bats.org.uk



countryside question that needs answering? Ask us at editor@ countryfile.com



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#### OPINION

# Sara Maitland

The Battle of the Beanfield was a black day for civil liberties and access to the countryside

Illustration: Lynn Hatzius



mass arrest since the Second World War. On top of 537 arrests, 140 homes were razed, 24 people were hospitalised, pregnant women were clubbed, five dogs were destroyed. The Observer described the event as "extremely violent and very sickening". Despite the arrests, there were very few convictions - and one was against a policeman for Actual Bodily Harm. This was the Battle of the Beanfield. You may not remember it, but we still live with its repercussions.

#### STONEHENGE SAVAGERY

The destroyed homes were mobile ones, belonging to about 600 New Age travellers making their way to Stonehenge, where the annual free festival had been banned. It remains unclear why anyone thought it would take over 1,300 police officers in riot gear to disperse the convoy. Most independent eyewitness accounts – from TV reporters, photographers and even the Earl of Cardigan – claim the police used excessive, savage violence against the travellers.

Perhaps it's easiest to see it as a phase in the ongoing struggle between those people who want to be of no fixed abode, and the authorities, who have found this a problem since 1350, when the Black Death killed over a third of the population. This led to an agricultural labour shortage, as

people left their villages to seek better paid work, threatening the feudal system. Laws were passed to force workers to return home; vagrancy became illegal.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries 200 years later, the legal responsibility for travellers fell on the parish rates (previously, monasteries cared for travellers). For settled communities, travellers of all kinds became an expensive nuisance. At a similar time, the Roma gypsies arrived – different, foreign-speaking and thus 'obviously' dangerous.

#### **ROMA ROMANTICISM**

Out of this complex history came five centuries of prejudice. In the late 19th-century, nostalgia for folklore presented the roaming freedom and colourful painted wagons as a traditional feature of British rural life, such as Toad's delightfully innocent caravan expedition in *Wind in the Willows*.



Sara Maitland is a writer who lives in Dumfries and Galloway. Her works include *A Book of Silence* and *Gossip* from the Forest. Unfortunately this romanticism divided travellers into 'pure' Roma – 'real gypsies', seen as an ancient, free people deserving support – and other travellers, perceived as vagrants and

work-shy petty criminals.
When the Roma gave up
horse-drawn transport in
the 20th century, it became

impossible to tell who was 'real' on sight, and the Roma were relinked with other travellers as disruptive and undesirable. This long history prepared the ground for the Battle of the Beanfield. All the

Battle of the Beanfield. All the frustrations of a society moving away from the libertarian movements of the 60s and 70s could focus here – the convoy was both New Age and travellers.

Despite recognition that the police had generated the violence, subsequent years saw legislation (in the 1986 Public Order Act and the 1994 Criminal Justice Act) that was punitively anti-traveller: withdrawing the obligation (only established in 1968) on boroughs to provide campsites; increasing police powers and introducing new legal concepts such as criminal trespass and 'trespassory assembly'.

The Battle of the Beanfield remains as it was described then, "a black day" for British justice, civil liberties and rural access.

It should not

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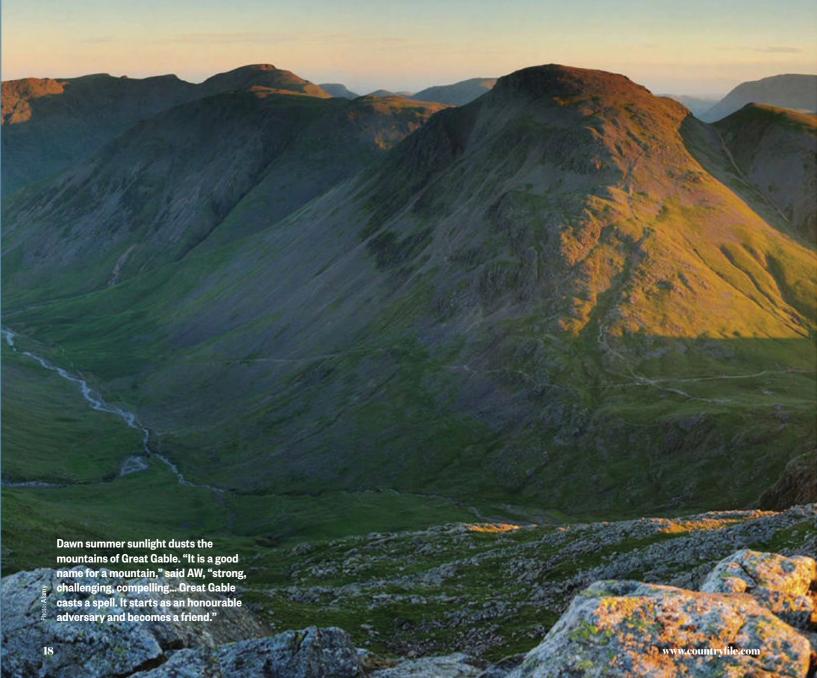
be forgotten.

**Have your say** What do you think about the issues raised here?

Write to the address on page 3 or email editor@countryfile.com

# WAINWRIGHT'S LAKE DISTRICT

"All who truly love Lakeland are exiles when away from it," wrote the great fell-walker. On the 60th anniversary of the publication of Alfred Wainwright's first book, fellow Lakeland lover **Hugh Thomson** returns to pay homage to the Western Fells that so enchanted the author



here can be few walkers in Britain who have not at some stage held one of Alfred Wainwright's beautifully produced volumes in their hands. The handwritten descriptions of each Lake District climb, along with maps and the odd trenchant aside, have become iconic. I met a woman the other day who had even designed her wedding invitation to look like a Wainwright illustration, with dotted lines to lead guests from car park to church to marquee, "where hopefully the best man will keep his speech short".

The heartland of the Lake District for Wainwright was the Western Fells, the mountains that fan out from Great Gable between the lakes of Wastwater and Buttermere. It is the area about which in 1966 he wrote the last and most personal of his acclaimed series of seven Lakeland books ('guides' is surely an inadequate term), at a time when he was falling in love with the woman who was to become his second wife; and it is where he chose to be remembered after his death. Not coincidentally, it is one of the less-visited corners of the Lakes as well, furthest from





### "EVERY TIME I COME BACK TO THE LAKES, I AM REMINDED HOW LUCKY WE ARE TO HAVE THEM"

#### **Hugh Thomson**

the M6 and the tourist magnets of Keswick and Grasmere. You have to work to get there; Wainwright did not go into the hills for company.

#### **THRILL OF THE CHASE**

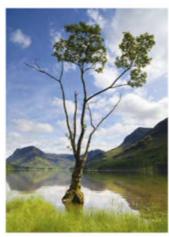
It is also the area I know best. For many years I have had a recurring dream. I stand on the top of Fleetwith Pike in the early morning. Below me, coming up the Honister pass and fanning out, are the hunters. I stand deliberately on the very top of the peak so that they can see me silhouetted. Then I blow the horn. The noise carries and echoes off across to Great Gable, Haystacks, Kirkfell. And the hunters start moving with greater purpose up towards me.

I turn and run back off the Pike and along the narrow ridge that drops down sharply towards Lake Buttermere. I feel as if I am running off the top of the world. I run with the adrenaline and the horn beating against my chest. I can no longer see the hunters, but I know they are behind me. Buttermere seems to be under my feet, but also miles away.

The hunters follow me – I can hear their voices over the bluff of the hill, echoing in the slate quarries of the Honister Pass. Of course the hunt is a game. But then again it isn't.

The dream comes from a time when I was younger and took part in fell-running manhunts across this area, when a few runners are chased down by the rest of the pack. As a way of getting to know every last twist and turn of the landscape, it is hard to beat. Runners will access the most remote and difficult terrain, from scree slope to hidden ghyll. The broken tussocks of Haystacks, right in the centre of the Western Fells – and Wainwright's favourite place "for a man trying to get a persistent worry out of his mind" – could lose a determined 'hare'









for hours, as the hunters circled round their prey, hearing his horn but never seeing him in the geological maze.

#### FROM FATHER TO SON

Every time I come back to the Lakes, I am reminded how lucky we are to have them. I have walked all over the world in the Himalaya, Andes and Patagonia, but there is something so perfectly to a human scale here in Cumbria that it always seems in a special class of its own.

It is a place I now want to take my oldest son Owen, who is 18. I recall Wainwright's encouraging words: "A child forgets many incidents of childhood, but he will always remember the day his old dad took him along the Climbers Traverse on Bowfell and up the Great Slab." Or in our case, Haystacks.

Where we begin our walk, under Fleetwith Pike in among the quarries of the Honister Pass, an attempt was made a few years ago to attract more youthful visitors to the Lakes. Mark Weir, a flamboyant local entrepreneur who flew to work in a helicopter, had already built a 'via ferrata' – a climbing route with fixed holds and aids, in the old quarry

Photo: Dave Willis

workings. He had also reopened part of the same quarry to extract slate and sell worked goods on the site. Now he wanted to add a zip-wire, so that those of an adventurous disposition could swing down and across for 1,219m (4,000 feet) from the summit.

There was uproar. The Friends of the Lake District declared that "this is just the wrong place for a new visitor attraction that would be aiming to attract large numbers of people". But I disagreed in a piece for *The Times*. It seemed to me that without just that sort of expansion of tourist activities, the area could die. Not all children get excited at the idea of a day's walking in the hills – and the Lake District can't live on sheep and tea shops alone.

Would AW (he would have thought it overfamiliar to call him plain Alfred) have approved of the project? When he said: "You were made to soar, to crash to earth, then to rise and soar again," I don't think he was talking about zip wires. Yet Wainwright was not sentimental, and was always interested in the industrial archaeology he came across, so might have been sympathetic at least to the idea of employment (if not the zip-wire, which he would have seen as an abominable way of getting down a mountain).

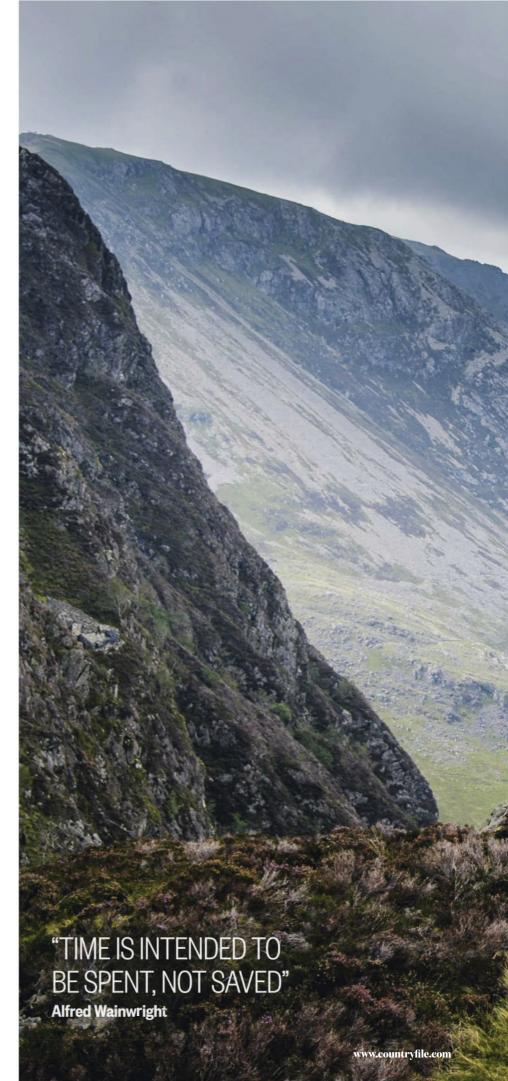
The zip-wire never happened and Mark has since died tragically in a helicopter crash. Many locals remember him as someone who, while controversial, tried his best to bring much needed employment to the area.

#### **FLEET OF FOOT**

We walk up to, in AW's words, "the supremely beautiful view and soaring ridge" at the top of Fleetwith. "So did you really run down that?" says Owen disbelievingly, pointing to the steep descending edge that fell away towards Buttermere from the spot where many years before I had blown my horn. "And then back up there," (from Gatesgarth to the Scarth Gap and Haystacks summit) "without stopping?"

I try to pull in my stomach and maintain a dignified stance. "Well, I had to stop to blow my horn sometimes, so they could follow. And once they caught me on Haystacks, we all stopped for a sandwich." For, this being a very English affair, rather than rip me apart in Bacchanalian fashion after the passions of the chase, my pursuers stopped after the 'kill' and we all paused for a bit before I set off again to lead the hounds on.

Owen and I take a more sedate route over







pausing at the newly restored Dubs Hut, an old quarry workers' bothy now used as climbers' refuge ("just a shame the bailiffs have taken all the furniture," some wit has written in the comments book).

Haystacks unfolds in its many layers of geological complexity before us, a place that still holds a peculiar fascination for me, however many times I come. It is possible to wander for hours around its heather-clad knolls and never quite take the same route twice. Owen immediately sees its appeal. We reach Innominate Tarn at its centre, a lake some argue Wainwright named, if you can name something that is innominate. On earlier maps – like the old OS map I have that cost £1.50, dating it considerably – it is anonymous; more recent ones have followed the name he gave it in his guide.

That it was a special place for him is clear. In *Memoirs of a Fellwanderer*, he made a very public statement of his wish to have his ashes scattered "where the water gently laps the gravelly shore and the heather blooms and Pillar and Gable keep unfailing watch. A quiet place, a lonely place. I shall go to it, for the last time, and be carried: someone who knew me in life will take me and empty me out of a little box and leave me there alone."

As we sit on the shores of the heatherrimmed tarn, in the bowl of what Wainwright once called the sunset side of the Lakes, with the light edging the mountains, I also remember the typically self-deprecating comment with which he followed this rare statement of emotion: "And if you, dear



ABOVE The stone-built Dubs Hut, a former mining bothy with a slate roof, built above Honiston Pass. It offers free, ultra-spartan accommodation: ie, a stone floor

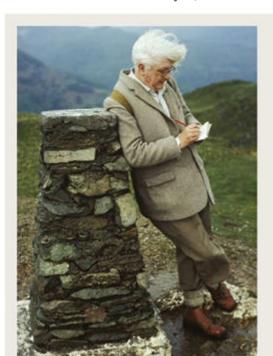
reader, should get a bit of grit in your boot as you are crossing Haystacks in the years to come, please treat it with respect. It might be me."

We still have some miles to go, travelling up and over Green Gable before descending Sour Milk Gill to Stonethwaite, where Wainwright had camped on some of his early adventures in the hills as a young man.

"Well," says Owen, "we better get going. You can talk the fell-running talk, but let's see if you can still walk the walk?" •



**Hugh Thomson** is the author of a series of books about travel and exploration. He won the 2014 Wainwright Prize for Travel and Nature writing for *The Green Road into the Trees*.



#### AW AND THE WAINWRIGHT SOCIETY

The Wainwright Society was formed in 2002 and now has over 2,000 members. The society promotes Alfred Wainwright's vision of bringing fell-walking to a wider audience and caring for the hills, including contributing to public debate on landscape quality and the quality of life in upland areas, particularly the Lake District. The society fundraises for good causes that it believes Wainwright would have supported, and the Wainwright Memorial Lecture has attracted a number of prominent speakers including Hunter Davies, Alan Hinkes and Rory Stewart MP.

Wainwright's principal concern was for the Lake District fells, which were the subject of his *Pictorial Guides* series of books. However, he had affection for many other spots in Lakeland such as Patterdale post office – the first shop that offered to sell copies of *The Eastern Fells* in

1955 – and places where he dined out after his days of fell-walking, such as the café in Ambleside, where he ordered egg and chips and a pot of tea for half a crown (sadly now long closed down). Then there was the Keswick Restaurant where, on his appearances each Sunday afternoon, Winnie the waitress would call out to the kitchen, "Plaice and chips for one!"

Some of his favourite locations were not on the high fells. Packhorse bridges were often the subject of his pen and ink sketches, such as Slater's Bridge in Little Langdale and High Sweden Bridge just outside Ambleside. Blea Tarn in Langdale was the subject of his very first Lakeland sketch drawn in 1942. He also wrote a special book of walks, still in print, from stations along the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway.

by Derek Cockrell, The Wainwright Society

Photos: Dave Willis, Homer Sykes

# **NOW GO THERE**>

Hugh Thomson on the best places to stay, local treats and unmissable sights...

#### **MAPPED OUT**

- Haystacks
- The Alhambra Cinema
- Riverside Bar
- Royal Oak
- Seatoller House
- Ashness Farm Bed and Breakfast

#### MY FAVOURITE 4-5 MILE WALK

When Wainwright's ashes were scattered at Innominate Tarn, the mourners walked from the Honister Pass. Start up the old, well-trodden Tramway to the crossroads at the ruined foundations of Drums House - take a right-hand track towards the quarries, leaving them to your left as you head up Fleetwith Pike, passing the via ferrata on your right. Walk along the beautiful top of the pike, with stupendous views of Buttermere, to the summit at the far end. Then follow what Wainwright would call 'an intermittent path' back down the left flank of Fleetwith towards Dubs Bottom and the climbers' hut, from which a clearer track leads up to Innominate Tarn in the centre of Haystacks. Retrace and follow the more direct line back to Honister Pass.





#### ALFRED WAINRIGHT, THE WESTERN FELLS

"THE FLEETING HOUR OF LIFE OF THOSE WHO LOVE THE HILLS IS QUICKLY SPENT, BUT THE HILLS ARE ETERNAL. ALWAYS THERE WILL BE THE LONELY RIDGE, THE DANCING BECK, THE SILENT FOREST; ALWAYS THERE WILL BE THE EXHILARATION OF THE SUMMITS"

Illustration www.sinclair-illustration.co.uk (Map for illustration purposes only. Please consult appropriate road/OS



#### IF YOU ONLY CLIMB ONE PEAK...

#### **Haystacks**

Travel there either by the route described in the walk opposite, or by the ascent from Gatesgarth and Lake Buttermere, which is also charming. Wainwright himself lists no fewer than four different routes there, of varying degrees of difficulty, so the visitor can have no excuse.



#### **FOR A RAINY DAY**

#### The Alhambra Cinema, Keswick

A fine old building that gets queues round the block on rainy days. Also worth checking out is the nearby, beautifully situated Theatre by the Lake, which has regular performances. Note: the reason the Lake District has so many cafes and tea shops is undoubtedly to do with the weather. www.keswick-alhambra.co.uk

#### Riverside Bar, Rosthwaite

Most walkers in Borrowdale will end up at the Riverside Bar in Rosthwaite. Tucked behind the rather grander façade - and prices - of the Scafell Hotel, the bar has a terrace overlooking the water and hearty dishes of game, lamb or their self-proclaimed "best burger in the lakes".

**GREAT DRINKING HOLE** 

www.scafell.co.uk/the-riverside-bar

#### WHERE TO EAT

#### Royal Oak, Keswick

The Royal Oak on Main St in Keswick is hard to beat (Wainwright Ale is on tap). You can order a whole roast chicken that is put between you on the table so you can attack it from all sides, with unlimited chips for those hill-stoked appetites. www.royaloakkeswick.co.uk



#### **PLACES TO STAY**



#### MID PRICE

#### **Seatoller House**

This suits those who arrive without their own transport, as it is right at the end of the bus route and a perfect jumping off point for the Western Fells. It's steeped in fell-running history, as the lake hunters have stayed here so often they eventually bought the place. From £71.50 per person, including a four-course dinner.

www.seatollerhouse.co.uk



#### BUDGET

#### **Ashness Farm Bed and Breakfast**

A superbly sited - and good value - place to stay for those with their own transport, sitting under High Seat and above Derwentwater. A working farm, it provides both an excellent Aga-cooked breakfast but also a far more comfortable stay than some of the more austere offerings elsewhere - and is a stone's throw from the picturesque and much photographed Ashness Bridge. Highly recommended. Rooms from £36 per person.

www.ashnessfarm.co.uk

BBC

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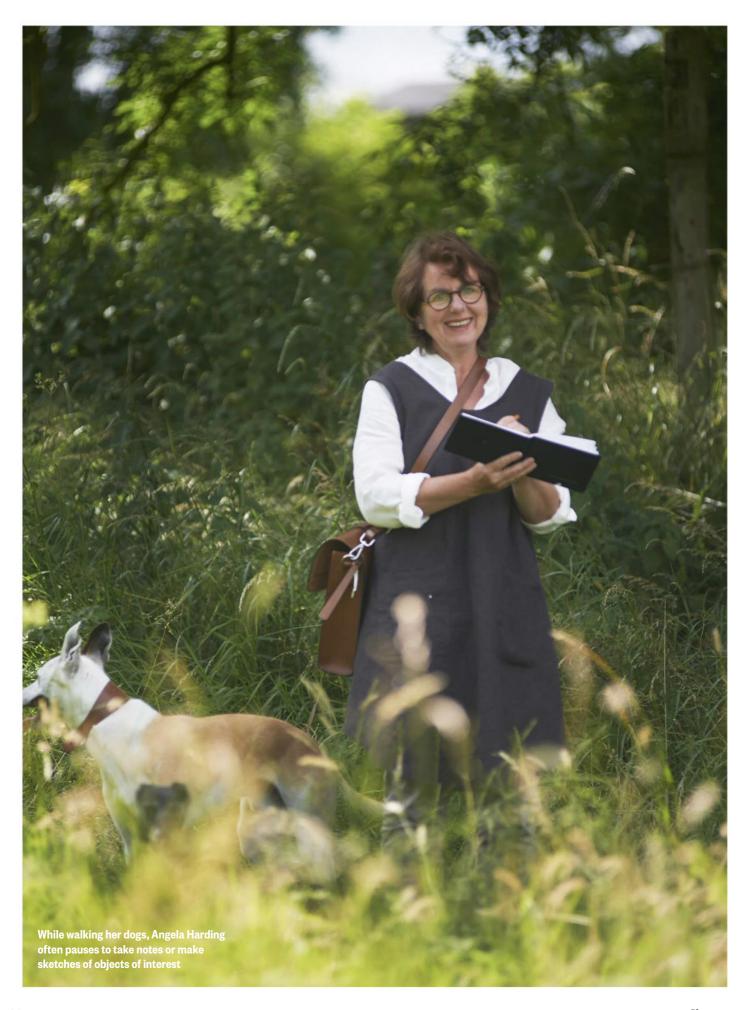
# Enjoy our magazine on...

















ABOVE Painting brushes and wooden spoons are key tools; walking Ami and Syd gets Angela outdoors every day; at work in her studio

# A natural talent

From her studio in the Rutland countryside, **Angela Harding** creates prints inspired by the landscape and wildlife around her

Words: Rosanna Morris Photos: William Shaw

ooking up from the desk in her studio at the bottom of her garden, printmaker and painter Angela Harding spies a shape silhouetted against the sky through the large window overlooking the Rutland countryside. She identifies the shape instantly by its unmistakable reddish-brown body, angled wings, forked tail and the way it hangs gracefully looking for prey. "A red kite," she says. "We get lots of them around here. I haven't done anything with them though. I must."

It's safe to say Angela knows her birds. Dunnocks, cuckoos, kestrels, buzzards, owls, robins, chaffinches – bird life provides endless inspiration for her work, which beautifully depicts the flora and fauna of the British countryside. She is yet to draw or paint a red kite, however. The blackbird, on the other hand, is a regular protagonist.

"I love blackbirds," she says. "They're my favourite. They're always around and look you in the eye as if they're saying something to you. I love their ordinariness and sharpness, their simple shape."

#### A CHILDHOOD OBSESSION

Even as a child, Angela was obsessed with birds. "When my friends had Barbie dolls, I had a little suitcase full of feathers. Instead of posters of pop stars, I had birds on my bedroom walls."

### "It sounds slightly macabre but I used to collect and draw 'keeper's gibbets"

But rather than become an ornithologist, Angela pursued a career in the arts. From 1979 to 1982 she studied fine art at what was then Leicester Polytechnic and later obtained an MA in the subject at Nottingham Trent University. As a student she focused on anatomical drawings. "It sounds slightly macabre

but I'd collect and draw 'keeper's gibbets' – jays, stoats, crows, rooks and magpies left by a gamekeeper. I also picked up roadkill and drew that."

Angela has worked in print since the early 1980s but her career really took off 10 years ago, when she moved to a Rutland village, aptly named Wing. She chose the house in which she lives for its large garden, where she built her studio.

Today, her art is comparable to that of her contemporaries Mark Hearld and Angie Lewin. They all share an interest in natural history, although each uses

different techniques and has their own distinctive style.

#### **DAILY ROUTINES**

Angela has vast windows on two sides of her studio so she doesn't miss much. "It's like sitting in the fields," she says. "I spend a lot of time looking." In the winter, with a pair of binoculars







ABOVE Mushroom-handled cutting tools; Angela's studio overlooks the Rutland countryside; Home Bird, a lino and silkscreen print

always to hand, she'll spy on fieldfares and redwings and perhaps the odd grazing muntjac. Come springtime, she'll gaze at hares cavorting and birds nesting. The things she witnesses become subjects for her work.

Walking her dogs, Ami the whippet and Syd the lurcher, is another daily routine that often sparks Angela's ideas. She loves immersing herself in the Rutland landscape, which she

### "I don't do lots of design first – I think it keeps the work fresh"

describes as "soft" and "cosy". "I like walking the same route every morning," she says. "We leave the village by going across farmland and through a little spinney. I enjoy the open aspect of the land – it's quite rolling here. I also love being out by myself. You see things more personally."

Other places in Britain that inspire Angela include Norfolk ("it has a great salt-marsh atmosphere"), Cornwall and Shropshire.

If anyone sees Angela on her walks, they may notice her pause, take out her sketchbook and scribble something down. She could be drawing but she might also be writing a note to herself. In one of her sketchbooks, which is full of doodles of birds she watched at nearby Rutland Water, one of her jottings reads "cormorants stalking around like old people".

"I mostly write down ideas and experiences," says Angela. "My sketchbooks contain references and notes on things I've seen or read. I don't formally draw anything as a picture. I've changed how I work over the years. When my children [George, 21, Holly,

22, and stepdaughter Amber, 22] were young, I didn't always have time to sketch, so I'd keep an image in my head. I still do that now. An impression of running foxes in Yorkshire has stayed with me since

I was a girl and I'm planning to do something on them soon."

#### **READING, RADIO AND RED KITES**

When beginning a piece, Angela takes her idea and refers to books and other artworks. She is strongly influenced by such artists as 1930s painter and illustrator Eric Ravilious, who famously captured the landscape of the chalk downs of southern England, and 18th-century naturalist and wood engraver Thomas Bewick, who wrote and illustrated natural history books, including several on birds. "I have hundreds of books on flowers but it's my Thomas Bewick book that I go to most often. That would be in my *Desert* 

Island Discs of books," says Angela, an avid Radio 4 listener who times her lunch each day so she can catch *The Archers*. Literature is also an important reference, particularly poetry. Angela is currently planning a series of prints on Yorkshire and is reading works by former poet Laureate Ted Hughes.

To start a print, Angela will draw the design on to the vinyl or lino block and then carve it using cutting tools. "I don't do lots of design first. I think it keeps the work fresh." She builds up her image in stages and takes proofs to see how it's developing, printing on newspaper before switching to the display paper when she's happy with it.

She will then add layers of colour – the soft greens, greys and blues of the English landscape – to complete her original, handmade print. And she doesn't stop. She works everyday and is always playing around with designs. Perhaps the red kite will be next.

• VISIT ANGELA'S STUDIO on 6-7 or 13-14 June as part of Rutland Open Studio, or see her show show at Cambridge Contemporary Art in October. For details and to see more of Angela's work, go to angelaharding.co.uk



Rosanna Morris is a Somerset-based freelance journalist who specialises in art and antiques. "I really enjoyed how Angela described her love of blackbirds – I look at them so differently now."





ABOVE Tall windows on two sides of Angela's studio let in lots of light; Angela's freshly printed Blackbird Stealing Redcurrents hangs to dry



# CREATE A PRINT IN SEVEN STEPS...

Sharp cutting tools and a steady hand are the key ingredients for making a print, as is somewhere out of the way to hang the finished article while it dries.

**YOU WILL NEED:** Swiss cutting tools no 11 and no 12, a roller, a wooden spoon, newspaper, printing paper, Japanese double-sided vinyl, an inking slab (a sheet of Perspex or glass on which to roll out the ink), rags for cleaning and good light – this is essential in order to see what you're cutting.



Use a practice block to try out different marks for tonal qualities. You can use all sorts of techniques including lines, dots, cross hatching and clear areas for pure white and black. It's these lines that will form an image. Practise carving your design and remember that the final print will be a mirror image – wherever you carve will be white on the print.



The way you hold the cutting tools and the angle of the blade is extremely important. Tuck the handle of the Swiss cutter into your palm and gently push the tool forward, ensuring your other hand is out of the way.

NEVER cut towards your hands. To cut properly, both of your hands should always be behind the sharp cutting ends. The block is a soft Japanese vinyl and cuts easily.



Once you've carved out your design and you feel ready to print, brush over the block with a dry rag to remove any loose pieces of vinyl. The raised areas will take the ink and produce the image, whereas the areas that you've carved out will remain white.





Place a small amount of ink (about the size of a 50p coin) on the inking slab. Use the roller to even out the ink, rolling back and forth several times. Then run the inked roller over the block, changing direction repeatedly to give an even covering across the entire image. Too much ink will result in loss of detail, not enough and the image won't be clear as the black areas will not be solid.



Here's where the wooden spoon comes in. Place a sheet of printing paper over the inked block and add pressure, rubbing the back of the paper with the wooden spoon. For the best results, rub the spoon in small circular motions.

Apply strong pressure to transfer the image.



Carefully pull away the paper to reveal the print. If you're not entirely happy with your print, it might be worth making several proofs on newspaper and tweaking the design before you use the printing paper for the final image.



To add depth and colour, Angela combines block printing with silkscreen printing. This is done using hand-cut paper stencils – one for each colour. Angela mixes her own water-based inks, which have a flat chalky finish. These contrast well with the oil-based ink used for the block. All the coloured sections of the image are printed first and then the finished block is printed on top of them.

When you're finished, leave the print to dry. One of Angela's finished prints is likely to have been overprinted with the different colours six to seven times. All of Angela's prints are original, handmade limited editions.



**Learn printmaking** Try print-making at courses around the UK. Find more at **www.countryfile.com** 







he seas and coastline around the UK are home to some of the most colourful, fascinating and beautiful marine life in the world with well over 10,000 different species living in our seas and around our shoreline. From the enormous basking shark and the world's largest turtle, the leatherback, right down to the tiny short snouted seahorse and the delicate pink sea fan all can be found right here on our very own doorstep.

Yet our seas are losing biodiversity at an alarming rate. Previously familiar species

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- $\bullet~\pounds 5$  will help equip 2 volunteers with items needed to run a beach clean survey.
- £10 will mean 10 more people choosing fish from sustainable sources, reducing pressure on endangered fish species and other marine animals.
- £20 will buy an angling litter bin to help reduce dangerous fishing line left on our beaches.
- £50 will mean we can run a beach clean to remove litter from over a mile of coastline.
- $\bullet$  £100 will help us fight for more Marine Protected Areas, as only 1% of UK seas are currently fully protected.

Donate by visiting www.mcsuk.org/3ospecies or call the Marine Conservation Society on 0300 3300 704 such as the common skate, angel shark and European sturgeon are now classed as critically endangered. More and more rubbish is being dumped in our seas and ending washed up on our beaches. Fish stocks are being fished towards the brink of extinction. A tipping point has been reached and, if we don't act now, some of our marine animals may disappear forever.

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS), the UK charity that protects our seas, shores and wildlife, has, in its 30th year, launched the 30 Threatened Species Appeal to raise awareness of the plight of our marine life, and to raise at least £30,000. The 30 species which have been selected all have one main thing in common they all appear on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. MCS wants to ensure that each of the 30 species is still around in 30 years' time.



# 30 THREATENED SPECIES

The ones you have probably heard of: Leatherback turtle, puffin, harbour seal, sperm whale, Atlantic cod, Eurasian otter, common eel, Atlantic halibut, basking shark, loggerhead turtle, harbour porpoise, common skate, bottlenose dolphin, blue shark, bluefin tuna, European sturgeon.

The ones you may not have heard of: Undulate ray, porbeagle shark, angel shark, angular roughshark, thresher shark, frilled shark, short-snouted seahorse, long-snouted seahorse, sei whale, pink sea fan, velvet scoter, Balearic shearwater, tope shark, spiny dogfish.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

## A few amazing facts about our 30 threatened species

- Basking sharks can grow to 11 metres long and weigh up to 7 tonnes. They were once hunted for their liver oil but thanks to legislation changes they are now protected in the UK
- The leatherback turtle breathes on the surface but can stay underwater for over half an hour.
- The pink sea fan looks like a plant but is actually a colony of tiny anemone-like creatures.
- The sei whale is the ninth largest living animal

on our planet, weighing up to 45 tons – roughly the weight of six adult African elephants!

- Elvers are so transparent that you can read a newspaper through them!
- The male seahorse carries the eggs and young in their bellies and birth contractions can last up to 12 hours.



To find out more, please visit: www.mcsuk.org/3ospecies



### COUNTRYFILE ISSUES

## **JOHN CRAVEN**

## THE NATIONAL TRUST'S PLANS TO SAVE OUR WILDLIFE

four countryside is to have a decent, viable future, it will need lots of tender loving care. Substantial long-term plans are essential if its people, economy and wildlife are to be protected. So let's congratulate one organisation with enough clout to achieve such things for coming up with a comprehensive strategy for the next 10 years and more.

To many people, the National Trust means stately homes. But it is also one of Britain's biggest landowners with 250,000 hectares (617,000 acres) of farms and 775 miles of coastline - and over the next decade, it will spend around £1 billion on conserving its houses, gardens and countryside. Not only that, it is pledging to work more closely with others to improve the quality of land and attract wildlife back to fields, woods and river banks.

#### **FOUNDERS' DISMAY**

Director general Helen Ghosh says the Trust has done a decent job in protecting our built heritage for the public. But she sounds this warning: "Where our founders would say we have failed as a nation is in protecting our countryside and wildlife: 60% of wildlife species are declining. The natural environment is in poor health, compromised by decades of unsuitable management and under pressure from climate change. That's why the Trust will focus on playing its part in reversing this damage and creating the healthy and beautiful environment we need."

So in its agenda are pledges to



Volunteers for the National Trust plant heather seed on Mam Tor's steep hillsides above Castleton, Peak District

## "Europe's biggest conservation charity is doing a lot of thinking 'outside the box'"

cut energy usage by 20% by 2020 and source 50% from renewables. As a key player in feeding the nation, the Trust intends to develop innovative ways of managing land on a large scale that are good for farmers, the economy and the environment.

Figuring largely will be tenant farmers such as Neil and Sally Grigg, who have restored hedgerows and added wildlife borders to their farm in Devon, and Gary Schofield in North Yorkshire who, as well as tending

800 Swaledale sheep, looks after 10 acres of wildflower meadows and 23 miles of dry stone walls.

#### **SEEDS OF CHANGE**

The Trust also aims to help communities safeguard and enhance their own green spaces. The 'Tale of Two Cities' project sees the Trust working with Kew Gardens and local groups to form wildflower landscapes along Princess Parkway, a gateway to Manchester, and around Everton Park in Liverpool. "This is a major opportunity to change the look and feel of two major cities," says Sean Harkin, the Trust's gardener-in-residence.

Over on Clent Hills, known as the green lungs of Birmingham, teenage boys who have been suspended from school learn countryside skills alongside NT rangers as part of a Green Academy scheme with the city's youth service. It's yet another example of the Trust moving far away from its stately home image. It's good to see Europe's biggest conservation charity, with 1.4 million members, doing a lot of thinking 'outside the box'.

Helen Ghosh says the new strategy will benefit future generations and many of the changes may take 30 years or more. Maybe the latest set of politicians to take charge of our countryside should learn from the National Trust and draw up some credible long-term strategies themselves - and keep to them.



### BEHIND THE HEADLINES SPECIAL

## **RETURN OF THE LYNX**

The Eurasian lynx has not been seen in Britain since Saxon times, but could the wild cats be about to return to the British countryside? Reintroduction proposals in Scotland and plans to do the same in England have stirred huge interest. What are the issues, and is everyone in favour of bringing the cats back? **Mark Rowe** reports

he Lynx UK Trust plans to reintroduce lynx to Britain in the near future. Aberdeenshire, Ennerdale in the Lake District and Thetford Forest, which straddles Norfolk and Suffolk, will each receive up to six of the cats.

Assuming the licences the Trust applied for in May are granted, Eurasian lynx from Germany and Romania will be brought into the proposed areas.

Lynx eat deer, rabbits and hares, among other animals, and plans for their reintroduction have been broadly welcomed by environmentalists. "We're pretty confident the habitat and prey issues that people have raised are not really issues," says Peter Watson, chief executive of the

Deer Initiative (DI), which aims to manage the high deer numbers in the UK. "The remaining problem is acceptability to landowners and the public."

Landowners and gamekeepers are less sure and the farming industry is wary. "We have some questions," says Andrew Bauer, deputy director of policy for the National Farmers Union, Scotland. "There's a risk that the

the proposed areas"



A 183cm (6ft) man next to a Eurasian lynx, which stands at about 60-75cm

"Eurasian lynx from Germany and Romania will be brought into species becomes a fact on the ground before all assessments have been made. *Springwatch* makes a show about the animals, people get enamoured with them and it's then a brave politician that moves to take them out."

The Lynx UK Trust intends to introduce lynx of both sexes. Others suggest the first lynx should be males. "That would give us an exit strategy as we won't have a breeding population until we're confident the other issues are fine," says Watson.

A lengthy consultation process involving the public will take place before Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage decide whether or not to issue licences. Most observers are doubtful that reintroduction will happen this year.



## HISTORY OF THE LYNX

The Eurasian lynx is the largest lynx species, with long powerful legs and large webbed and furred paws. One of the most successful cat species, the lynx was originally found from the UK to China. Today, however, its numbers have greatly reduced in Western Europe, where populations are now mostly small and fragmented. In the UK the lynx was probably hunted to extinction for its fur between 500-700AD.

notos: RSPB Images, Alamy



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## + The advantages

#### **CONTROL OF DEER SPECIES**

+ The Lynx UK Trust (LUK) says lynx will help reduce numbers of roe deer and, in Thetford, also prey on non-native muntjac deer. "Lynx are major drivers of forest regeneration," says Dr Paul O'Donoghue, chief scientific advisor for the Trust. "The British countryside is dying and the lynx will bring it back to life." + "There is public support and an ecological need for lynx because of the role they fulfil in controlling roe deer. They are effectively a woodland restoration tool," says Simon Jones, director of conservation

at the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT). "There's also a moral argument for reintroducing a species that we wiped out."

+ Deer may become increasingly nomadic, reducing their ability to breed. "The lynx may create a

"The British countryside is dying and the lynx will bring it back to life"

ABOVE Lynx dispatch their prey with a bite to the neck climate of fear that reduces the fecundity of the deer – their reproduction goes down because they're trying to survive," says the Deer Initiative's Peter Watson.

+ Mike Seville, Forest and Woodlands Adviser for the Country, Land and Business Association says: "We will be investigating the lynx's potential environmental benefits, such as the possibility that they may play a part in reducing the muntjac deer populations that are damaging our woodlands."

#### A BOOST FOR TOURISM

- + "Economically it could be a big boost – by their nature [the places the lynx would be reintroduced] are very remote, fragile economies and tourism is a lifeline," says Stuart Brooks, of the John Muir Trust (JMT).
- + "Lynx are proven drivers of rural regeneration," says O'Donoghue of LUK. "The first place to have lynx in the UK will make millions of pounds from tourism. People will be excited by their presence. I expect farmers to benefit the most."

#### **SPECTACLE**

- + "It would massively enhance the experience of being outdoors if some of these animals were reintroduced," says Brooks (JMT). "Even if you don't see them, just knowing they're there enhances the sense of wildness." + "The major benefit would be
- the notion that there is an apex predator that you might catch a view of. The deer issue may not be the driving force," says Peter Watson (DI).

### COULD THE LYNX LEAD TO OTHER PREDATORS BEING REINTRODUCED?

YES says the John Muir Trust, which hopes to rewild the countryside by reintroducing native mammals in the near and distant future. "The beaver is at the immediate end of that spectrum and we believe that within five years there should be a trial reintroduction of the lynx," says Stuart Brooks of the Trust. "Wolves were once an important part of our ecosystem and we believe could be again in the future – though that would require public consultation and support."

says Peter Watson of the Deer Initiative. "All the evidence elsewhere suggests that the fragmented nature of our habitats and the pressure of population are against it," says Watson. "It's almost impossible to see a situation where you could introduce bears or wolves in a truly wild environment. We've got the prey but not the space. Wolves in the US have moved 500 miles – if that were the UK it means you would release them in Scotland and end up with them in London."



- The disadvantages

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY?**

- Due to the lynx's solitary and secretive nature, they do not present a threat to humans, points out Dr Paul O'Donoghue of the Lynx UK Trust. "There's not a single documented case of a lynx attacking humans. Lynx avoid people at all costs." - "It's an understandable fear and a question that should be asked," says the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Simon Jones. "But the evidence suggests that it's highly likely few people will ever even see them. The experience from other countries is that there is no risk with lynx."

#### THREATS TO LIVESTOCK

 Andrew Bauer of the NFU feels that farmers are unlikely to be properly compensated. "We'd be deeply sceptical of anyone saying lynx do not take sheep. But it's hard to prove every case where that happens. You don't always know how something dies and you can't be sure that compensation schemes will

continue in the same way in the future. People outside the farming community can also underestimate the emotional impact on farmers of losing an animal prematurely." "You tend to have polarised opinions early on and there are real concerns around how you manage lynx," says Simon Jones (SWT).

- "Farmers are worried about lynx taking sheep and whether there will be compensation schemes as on the Continent," says Peter Watson (DI).

#### **IMPACT ON BIRDLIFE**

- Mike Seville of the Country, Land and Business Association

"We'd be deeply sceptical of anyone saying that lynx do not take sheep"

may have on other species, particularly our rarer groundnesting birds. We will also want to investigate the likelihood of them preying on livestock, such as lambs and piglets." - "[Organisers of] pheasant

shoots fear their events may be affected," says Peter Watson of the DI. "I don't see lynx taking pheasants but you could get some disruption."

#### THE RIGHT LOCATION?

- "We have doubts over the sites and scale of the landscapes in Scotland," says Simon Jones of the SWT. "The lynx is a

> challenging species to introduce due to

> > the scale of the territory it needs. If you make the site too small, you stack the odds of success against you."

- Andrew Bauer of the NFU questions how effective lynx will

prove in Scotland. "Our deer are predominantly red, not roe, and live on open hillside."

**ABOVE AND TOP** 

**Eurasian lynx** from Germany could be used to reestablish the species in selected areas of the UK, such as **Aberdeenshire** 

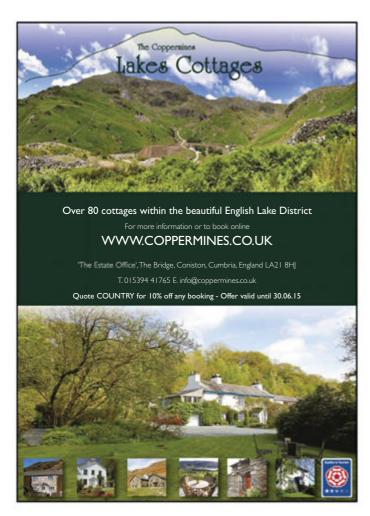
#### **ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS**

- "There's a real possibility of more traffic accidents as roe deer will be more disturbed," points out Peter Watson (DI).

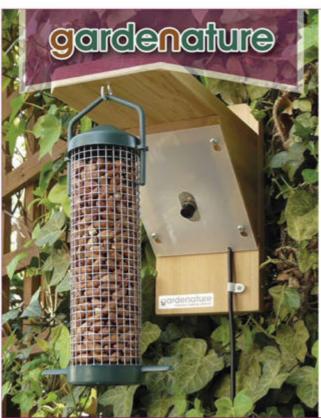
#### **CHANGES FOR FARMERS**

- Andrew Bauer (NFU) believes the tourism benefits can be overplayed. "Some farmers may decide it is for them, but lynx are not something you will spot within five minutes of arriving at a farm. Many farmers will say 'I'm a sheep farmer, it's what I do, why should I have to diversify?' This has a lot to do with people's world view." @

Have your say: What's your view? Write to the address on page 3 or email editor@countryfile.com







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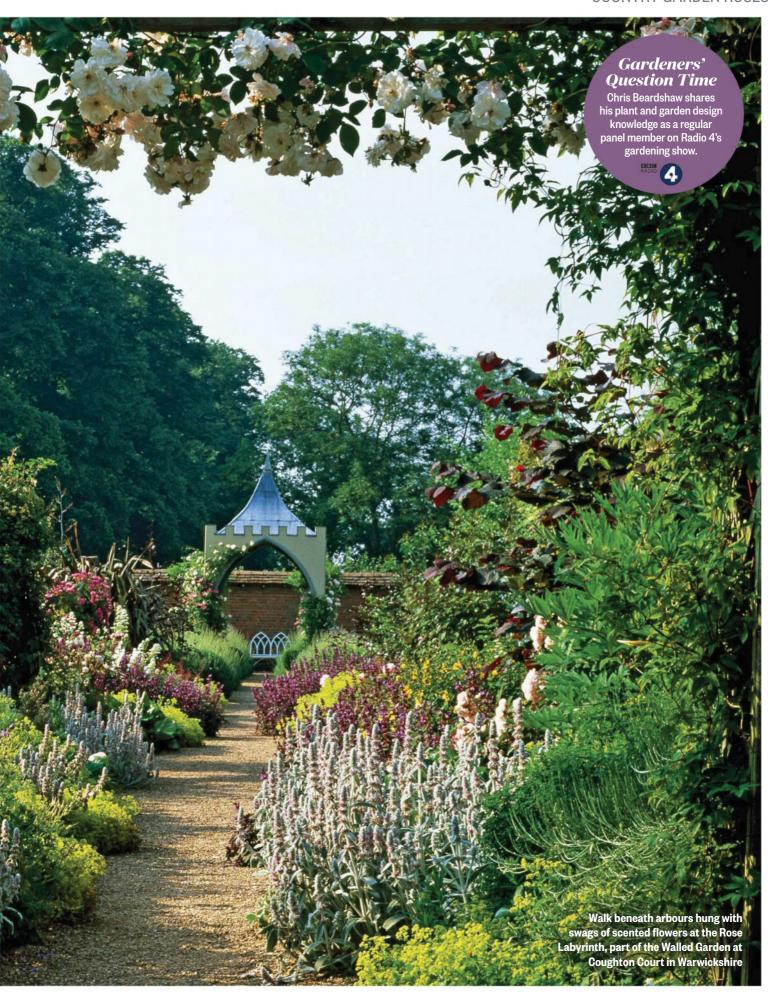


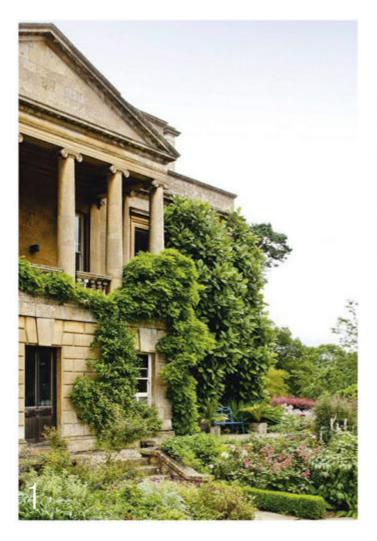




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#### **ABOVE**

1 The intimate gardens laid out around Kiftsgate Court inspired writer Chris Beardshaw with a lifelong love of gardening 2 Sissinghurst Castle Gardens are a great blend of structure and planting 3 The vast Kiftsgate rose is said to be the largest rose plant in England 4 One of England's finest rose collections

grows in Castle Howard's

**Walled Garden** 

ardens can evoke strong emotions; my first encounter with gardens that moved me was at two neighbouring properties in the Cotswolds: Hidcote and Kiftsgate Court. When I was a boy, my family and I regularly travelled from my home county of

Worcestershire to the Cotswolds. Even as a child, I was an avid plant collector and budding plantsman. When I visited these two beautiful country gardens, I was struck, not only by the stunning plants on show, but also by the structure and design of the spaces they contained.

Hidcote rightly gets a lot of attention. I paid homage to it myself with my show garden at Chelsea Flower Show in 2007. But **Kiftsgate Court Gardens** is a wonderful treat for garden lovers, too; it will always have a place in my heart. My understanding of the

importance of creating privacy in gardens -

"The Rose Border is stunning in summer, where the famed Kiftsgate rose takes centre stage"

and love for it – began at Kiftsgate. It is less formal and, some say, less masculine than Hidcote, perhaps because it was made by three generations of women, but the use of hedges to help compartmentalise the garden is done to great effect and sets off the themed gardens within. The Rose Border is particularly

stunning in summer, where the famed Kiftsgate rose (Rosa felipes 'Kiftsgate', pictured above middle) takes centre stage. To see it in all its glory, visit in July. I have included one in my own garden and am amply rewarded by the prolific nature of its white flowers with sunny centres.

Not far from Kiftsgate, about half an hour's drive to the north, is **Coughton** 

**Court Gardens** in Warwickshire. Started only in 1991, the gardens are now coming into their own. In keeping, I suppose, with many of the gardens I enjoy, there are both formal and informal spaces. They cover a range of habitats and planting opportunities, and feature a



knockout rose labyrinth, in which more than 200 different varieties of rose jostle for your attention. I defy you not to find a rose here that you will want to take home with you.

#### **NEW, ROMANTIC**

Another garden started in the last 25 years is a firm favourite of mine: I believe **Wollerton Old Hall** in Shropshire is now one of England's finest gardens. Roses abound, especially in the Rose and Sundial Garden. I visit every year and, as with all the best gardens, I discover something new each time. It's a testament to what you can establish in a relatively short time. The creators have woven their artistic characters into each themed space, but far from becoming a series of different exhibits, this garden works as a whole.

What I enjoy most are the contrasts – a game they play to perfection. First, you're knocked out by an area such as the Lanhydrock Garden, with its sensational and riotous summer colours; then you cool down and unwind in the next space you encounter, in this case the simplicity of either the Lime Allee or the Well Garden. Successfully pulling off this sequence of contrasts makes for a great garden.



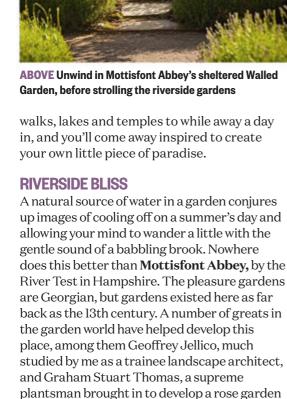
ABOVE The pretty Tudor house at Great Chalfield Manor is surrounded by sleepy orchards and fragrant rose gardens TOP Tall delphiniums mingle with roses in long borders fringed with catmint at Wollerton Old Hall in Shropshire

Sissinghurst Castle in Kent is widely celebrated as one of England's finest and most quintessential gardens. In creating this garden, husband and wife team Harold Nicholson and Vita Sackville-West divided their roles. Harold took on the architectural elements and divisions of the gardens, while Vita created the tapestry of floral planting that softens and romanticises the experience.

#### IN SWEET HARMONY

Roses abound across all the gardens at Sissinghurst. You'll find them being celebrated not only in the Rose Garden but in the Orchard, the Purple Border and the South Cottage Garden, where you'll come across one of my all-time favourites, *Rosa* 'Madame Alfred Carrière'. I have this rose climbing up a pergola in my garden and often pick a spray of blooms for my wife and daughters.

If roses do it for you, then a must-visit is **Castle Howard** in Yorkshire. There the Rose Garden nestles within the shelter of the Walled Garden, featuring a dizzying 2,000 varieties. It's an incredible feast for the senses. The rest of the gardens are impressive too, with more than 1,000 acres of woodland •





just over 40 years ago. Middle-to-late June is an



**Chris Beardshaw** is a renowned garden designer, plantsman and broadcaster. He has recently been appointed as an RHS Ambassador. Watch him on BBC Two Scotland's *The Beechgrove Garden* or find out more at **www.chrisbeardshaw.com** 

### NINE ROMANTIC ROSES

#### 1. ROSA 'MADAME ISAAC PEREIRE'

These full-petalled magenta flowers ooze with the richness of warm raspberries.

They have an open, slightly arching habit, making them perfect for the centre of borders, where herbaceous perennials can weave through the stems. Flowers late May and again in the autumn.

#### 2. ROSA 'SEAGULL'

A charming plant that weaves through trees and shrubs to attain 10m of growth with little effort. It produces flowers with the same apparent ease, carrying sprays of semi-double cream blooms with petals that expose ruffs of golden stamens.

#### 3. ROSA PAPA MEILLAND'

If you're looking for the perfect rose for cutting, try this plant. Its crimson buds are elegantly sculpted into fine points and carry an intense, sweet fragrance that fills the air like few others. It requires a warm location on well-drained soils away from winter wet to perform at its best – a spot by a sheltered wall is ideal.

#### 4. ROSA 'ALBERTINE'

Perhaps the ultimate rambling rose is this delicious coral-pink flowering form. Come summer, watch the hues wash through the flowers as they open and inhale its abundant scent, rich in floral, fruit and clove tones. It festoons boughs and structures with inflorescences reminiscent of opulent cottage gardens.

#### 5. ROSA RUBRIFOLIA

The cerise-pink blooms of the rubrifolia, sometimes known as *Rosa Glauca*, shine

out among the borders where this rose is best suited. I include it in most of my garden schemes because it is such a hard-working shrub, delivering beautiful flowers, eye-catching foliage of greypurple and attractive hips in the autumn.

#### 6. ROSA 'FANTIN-LATOUR'

Named after the rose painter Henri Fantin-Latour. The origins of this plant are something of a mystery, but it is worthy of cultivation simply because it produces densely packed vivid pink petals that drip with a floral citrus scent.

#### 7. ROSA GALLICA var. OFFICINALIS

A loosely petalled rich pink bloom that was the mainstay of the herbalist's garden in the 13th century. Attar of Otto (rose oil) is extracted from these, an essential oil considered to be the most exclusive. And since it takes 30 blooms to make one drop, it's easy to see why.

#### 8. ROSA 'MADAME ALFRED CARRIÈRE'

The double white flowers are delicately flushed with pink and beautifully scented. It's the perfect choice for a north-facing or shady spot; it's quick to establish and grow and rewards you with wave after wave of blooms throughout the summer.

#### 9. ROSA 'GÉNÉRAL JACQUEMINOT'

A rich crimson bloom of almost 30 petals, each with a white stripe on the underside. This plant, originally grown in the 1850s, has such a rich scent that when it was first introduced to America it is said that, weight for weight, it was eight times more expensive than gold.

#### **USEFUL INFO**

**COUGHTON COURT** Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JA. 01789 400777, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coughton-court

**KIFTSGATE COURT GARDENS** Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 6LN. 01386 438777, www.kiftsgate.co.uk

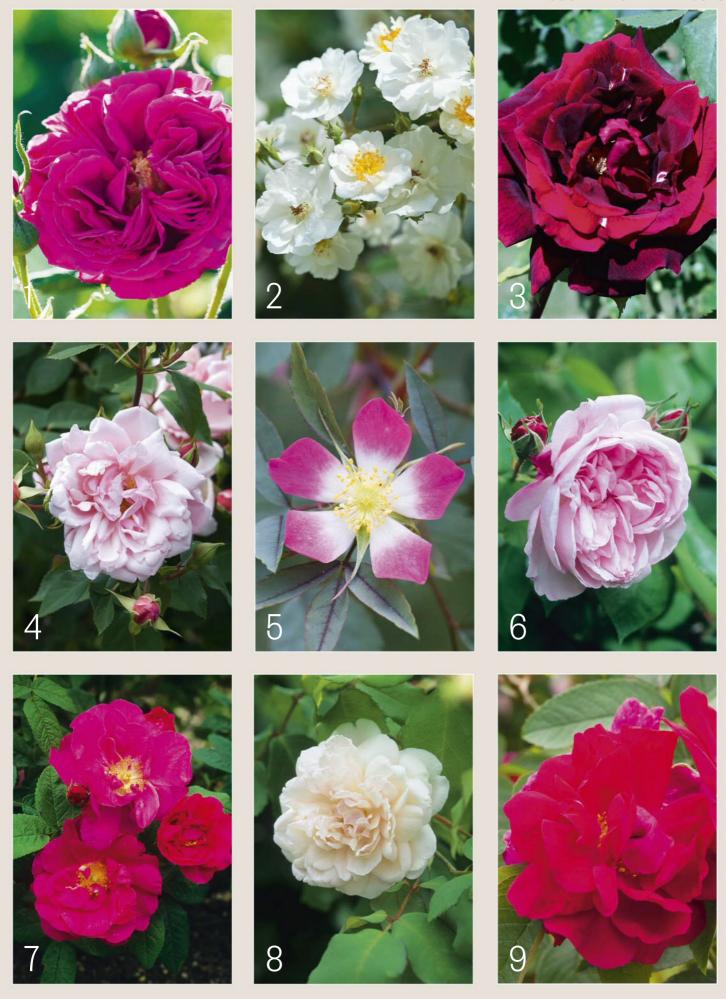
**WOLLERTON OLD HALL** Wollerton, Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 3NA. 01630 685760, www.wollertonoldhallgarden.com

**GREAT CHALFIELD** Manor Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8NH. £8.40 (gardens and house). 01225 782239, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/great-chalfield-manor

**CASTLE HOWARD** York Y060 7DA. 01653 648333, www.castlehoward.co.uk **MOTTISFONT ABBEY** Near Romsey, Hampshire S051 OLP. 01794 340757, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mottisfont

**SISSINGHURST CASTLE GARDEN** Biddenden Road, near Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2AB. 01580 710700, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle-garden

#### **COUNTRY GARDEN ROSES**



# In search of W-Worms

Twilight descends, and mysterious green lights appear in hedges and along country lanes... Pete Dommett spends an evening seeking out the most romantic of insect spectacles

Illustration: Tom Jay

Tasteful illumination of the night Bright scatter'd, twinkling star of spangled earth!

> from To the Glow-worm by John Clare (c 1820)

re you glow-worm hunters?" a grinning bearded man asks us. We hesitate for a moment and then my daughter Martha and I nod as he ushers us into a large courtyard garden. There's quite a gathering: ladies chatting loudly, excited children chasing each other about and, I notice, a lot of men with beards (myself included). With crickets singing and wine flowing, there's a distinctly Mediterranean vibe in the summer evening air.

We could be in Italy, but instead we're in Westbury-sub-Mendip, a small Somerset village between Cheddar and Wells, and we're here for a night of pure magic. Each year, on the last Thursday in July, the citizens of Westbury get together to count the village's population of glow-worms. These surveys are organised by retired local biology teacher (and appropriately named) Peter Bright. He welcomes us warmly, organises everyone into small search parties and offers us some tips.

"You'll find more glow-worms on southfacing hedges," Peter explains. "Look below knee height and, don't forget, the glowworms won't become visible until 9:55pm."

This all sounds rather precise, but we follow our team-mates, Nick and Dickon, up Perch Hill and along a narrow lane to our allocated patch. A late-night sortie of swifts is screaming somewhere high above us and a milky peel of moon barely lights our way.

"Perfect for glow-worm hunting," Nick whispers. "An overcast night makes it much easier to see them."

The church clock of St Lawrence's chimes 10 times and, right on cue, we spot it: low down in a scrubby verge, glow-worm number one. What strikes me most is how incredibly bright it is. A brilliant, lime-green light shines with the same unwavering intensity of any LED indicator found on a hundred electrical appliances around the home. Although I've seen this little beacon before, it's a dim and distant memory. But it's my daughter's first encounter.

#### **LADY FIREFLIES**

Crouching down, we briefly shine our torch to study it more closely. A grub-like, woodlousy creature - nearly an inch (25mm) long - is revealed, clinging tightly to a long blade of grass, the tip of its tail twisted upwards and ablaze with two narrow stripes and two tiny spots of neon. It's obvious how the glowworm got its name, but Martha remembers a line from Roald Dahl's James and the Giant Peach: "She isn't a worm at all. [Glow-worms] are simply lady fireflies without wings."



### HOW DO **GLOW-WORMS GLOW?**

The glow-worm's famous light show is produced by the chemical luciferin (from the Latin 'lucifer', meaning 'light-bearer') as it reacts with oxygen in the air. It's an incredibly efficient process: virtually all the energy is transferred into light, compared to an old-fashioned phosphorescent bulb, which wastes most energy as heat. It is the adult female's bright beacon that has earned the glow-worm its name, but males can glow faintly, too. The insect lights up at all stages of its life-cycle, in fact - probably as a warning to would-be predators. Even glow-worm eggs give off a faint glimmer.

50





And Roald was right. The common glowworm *Lampyris noctiluca* belongs to the same family as fireflies *Lampyridae* (which are really bioluminescent beetles) and it is the flightless female that does the glowing.

Glow-worms are a rare example of bioluminescence in terrestrial animals. This natural phenomenon is visible in a diverse array of wildlife, including insects, fungi and bacteria and more often seen in marine life, such as jellyfish, sponges, corals and squid. The meaning of light for many of these life forms is to lure prey or repel possible predators, but for the glow-worm it's all about love.

After spending two years as a voracious, snail-devouring larva, followed by two weeks pupating under a log, the first adult glowworms usually emerge soon after sunset on June evenings. The females find a good vantage point, from where they will be

visible to the smaller, winged males flying overhead, and turn on their lights. This display may last for two hours or more, but few carry on glowing much beyond midnight. For many, if they are fortunate enough to attract a male, it's a one-night only performance. If unsuccessful, she will

return to precisely the same place at the same time, for up to 10 nights, and try again.

Once mated, she will switch off her signal, lay between 50 and 150 eggs in a moist spot, then crawl away and die – her life's job done.

#### **DARK DAYS**

Wishing her luck, we leave her on her stem and continue with our survey. And once we've got our eye in, spotting these glittering green jewels is a doddle. Like eager children on an Easter egg hunt, we find them on the fringes of fields, hidden deep within hedges and spy one in a front garden from 50 metres away. This is citizen science at its easiest: a thoroughly enjoyable hour has flown by and we've seen 25 glow-worms in all.

Walking back past the vineyard to The Square, I'm suddenly aware of how dark this village is. Dickon tells me that the villagers voted to switch off many of the streetlights and this, in turn, could benefit their special residents.

The increasing illumination of our countryside - by streetlighting, home security lights, garden lights and cars - coupled with the all-too-common cocktail of habitat destruction, fragmentation and the use of pesticides, has created many 'no glow' areas and is thought to be one of the reasons for the species' long-term decline. By attracting male glow-worms, artificial lighting could be reducing the female's ability to do the same, with potentially disastrous consequences for an isolated population made even more vulnerable by the wingless female's inability to colonise new areas. Despite the difficulties they face, glow worms are not protected in any way.

#### **GET UP AND GLOW**

"Unlike other

bioluminiscent

life forms, to the

glow-worm, the

meaning of light

is all about love"

Perhaps another reason most people say they've never seen a glow-worm is that

we simply don't go looking for them anymore. When was the last time you took a late evening stroll along a country lane? (Turn to our Great Days Out section 'Roaming in the Gloaming' on page 71 for more evening adventures to be had in the countryside.) Glow-worms are

vastly unrecorded, making local surveys vitally important for monitoring existing sites. People are urged to submit any sightings to the national survey website www.glowworms.org.uk.

Once we have returned to the courtyard, Peter collects and collates our figures. The grand total is 103 glow-worms. This is about average, he declares, and fairly consistent over the nine years that he's been running the survey.

Here, at the foot of the Mendip Hills, the glow-worm's future seems secure. While less plentiful than they once were, glow-worms are probably not as rare as we think. They are still out there, like scattered, twinkling stars, waiting for us to find them.



**Pete Dommett** was *BBC Wildlife Magazine*'s Travel Writer of the Year in 2012. An avid birdwatcher since boyhood, Pete has recently become besotted with beetles and enjoys searching for glow-worms with his children.



### WHERE CAN YOU SEE GLOW-WORMS IN THE UK?

Glow-worms can be seen at thousands of sites across much of mainland Britain, but are more abundant in the south of England (and are not recorded in Northern Ireland). They are found in a wide variety of habitats: moorland and healthland, rough grassland and meadows, woodland rides, churchyards, grass verges and golf-courses. Looking along a canal towpath, footpath or cycle-route can prove profitable and disused railway lines seem to be particularly popular. Untidy gardens can be glow-worm friendly too.

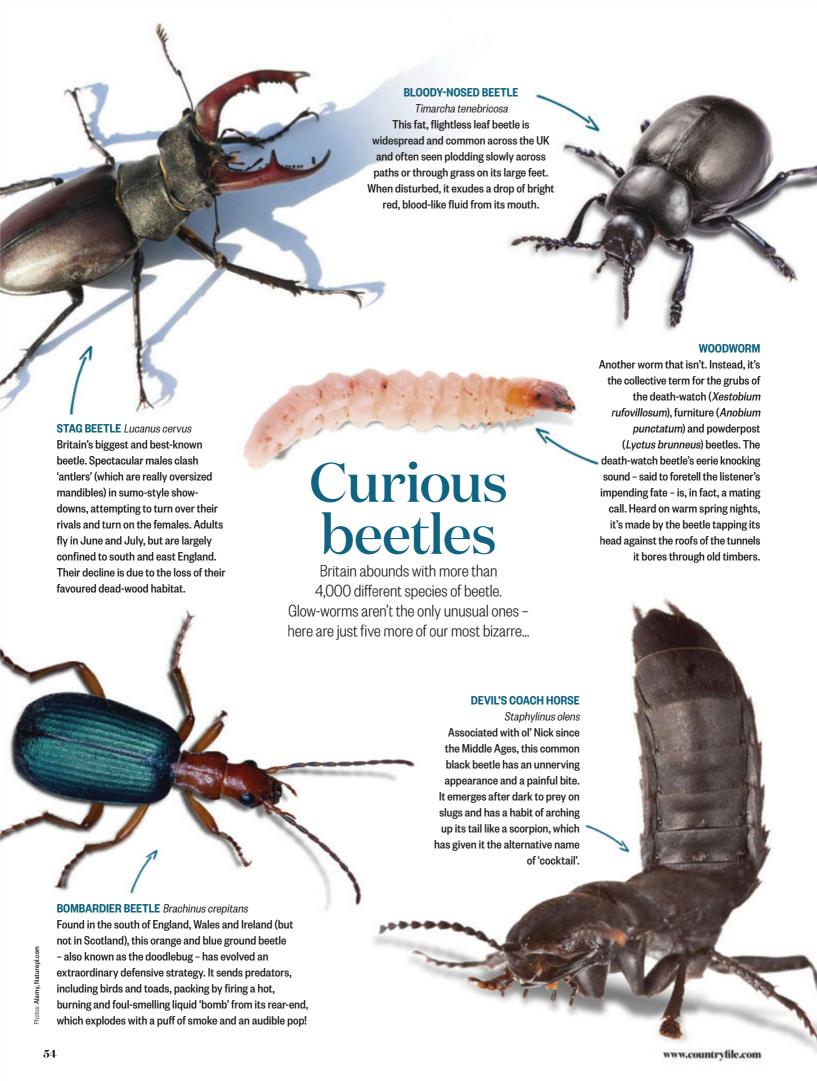
Historically good hot-spots include Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, Perthshire; Wicken Fen NNR, Cambridgeshire; Aston Rowant NNR in the Chilterns; the Great Orme headland, Llandudno, North Wales; and along the Tarka Trail in North Devon.

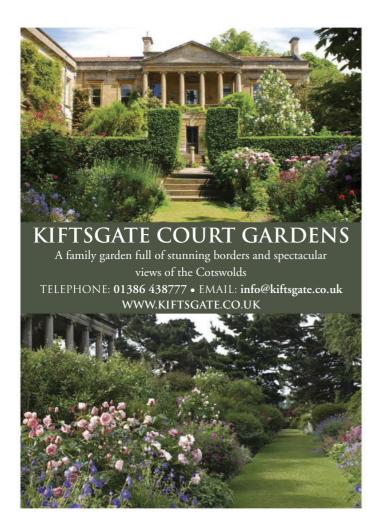
Glow-worms can be seen from late May to early September, but the peak glowing months are June and July.

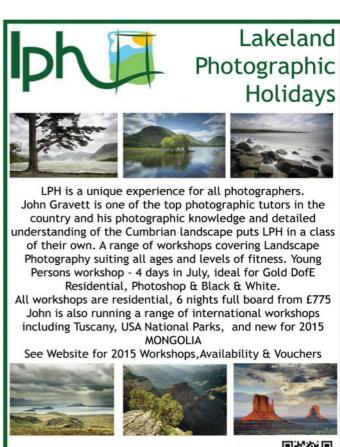
Find a survey, walk or event near you through the UK glow-worm survey website www.glowworms.org.uk or by contacting your local Wildlife Trust.



Turn over for our guide to five bisarre beetles •







www.lakelandphotohols.com info@lakelandphotohols.com 017687 78459



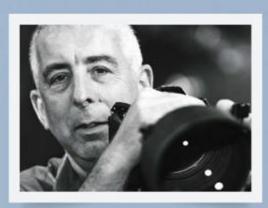


## HOW TO TAKE WINNING PHOTOGRAPHS: PART 2

# WILDLIFE

Countryfile's calendar competition is launched this month, so we asked top wildlife photographer Chris Gomersall to reveal his surefire ways to shoot breathtaking images of birds and animals

mages of wildlife always feature heavily in the Countryfile calendar photo competition - the natural world has instant appeal. But capturing images of elusive animals is tricky - and even when you have a wonderful subject in your sights, how do you fashion something a bit special that will capture the judges' attention? Here, award-winning wildlife photographer Chris Gomersall offers his advice on how to improve your chances of taking that great wildlife photograph...



### WHAT MAKES A GREAT WILDLIFE SHOT?

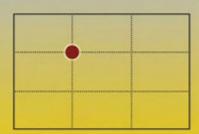
#### **COMMON WHITETHROAT (LEFT)**

"There are no heroics, epic travels or terrible hardships behind this picture. It's simply the result of knowing my local patch, patient observation, and repeat effort. Whitethroats are common summer visitors throughout the British Isles, often associated with farmland and hedgerows. The males tend to return to a few favourite song perches and, as long as they feel safe, they soon ascend to a high vantage point to proclaim their territory. Once I'd identified the best spot, it was

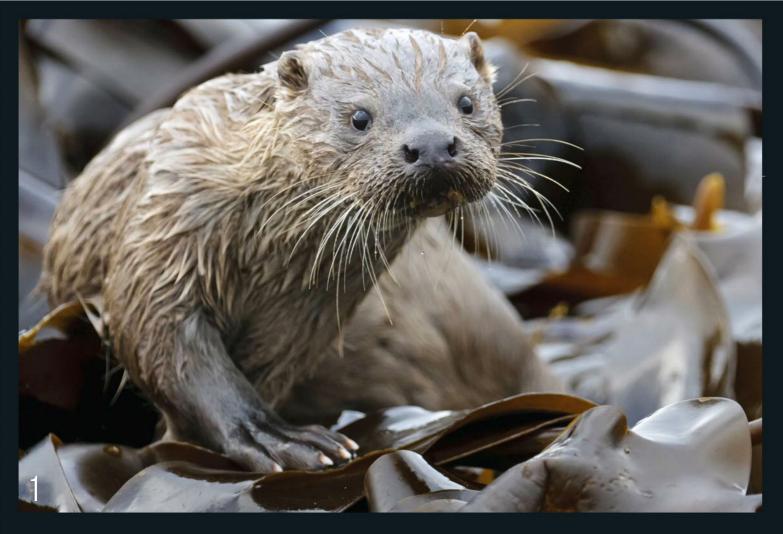
just a matter of waiting quietly for normal service to resume. And then doing it again and again until I was happy with the light and composition.

"My favourite photographs are those made from 'basic ingredients' and commonplace situations, where I've been able to imagine the finished product and then achieve something approaching that ideal. The goal is to capture the essence of the subject in a way that will resonate with the viewer. I want people to say 'Yes, that's exactly how I remember a whitethroat'."

- 1. The bird is positioned at a compositional power point, roughly at an intersection of thirds (right).
- 2. Its singing references seasonal behaviour and adds interest.
- 3. The image is framed wide to incorporate key elements of the
- 4. Inclusion of oilseed rape at bottom of the frame suggests lowland arable habitat.
- 5. Complementary primary colours (blue/yellow) says spring.













## STEPS TO GREAT WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

#### **1 EYE CONTACT - OTTER**

"Eye contact can make your pictures more compelling, provided the animal doesn't appear startled. Watch for that slight turn of the head and a 'catchlight' reflection in the eye to bring the subject to life."

#### **2 BACKDROP - RED KITE**

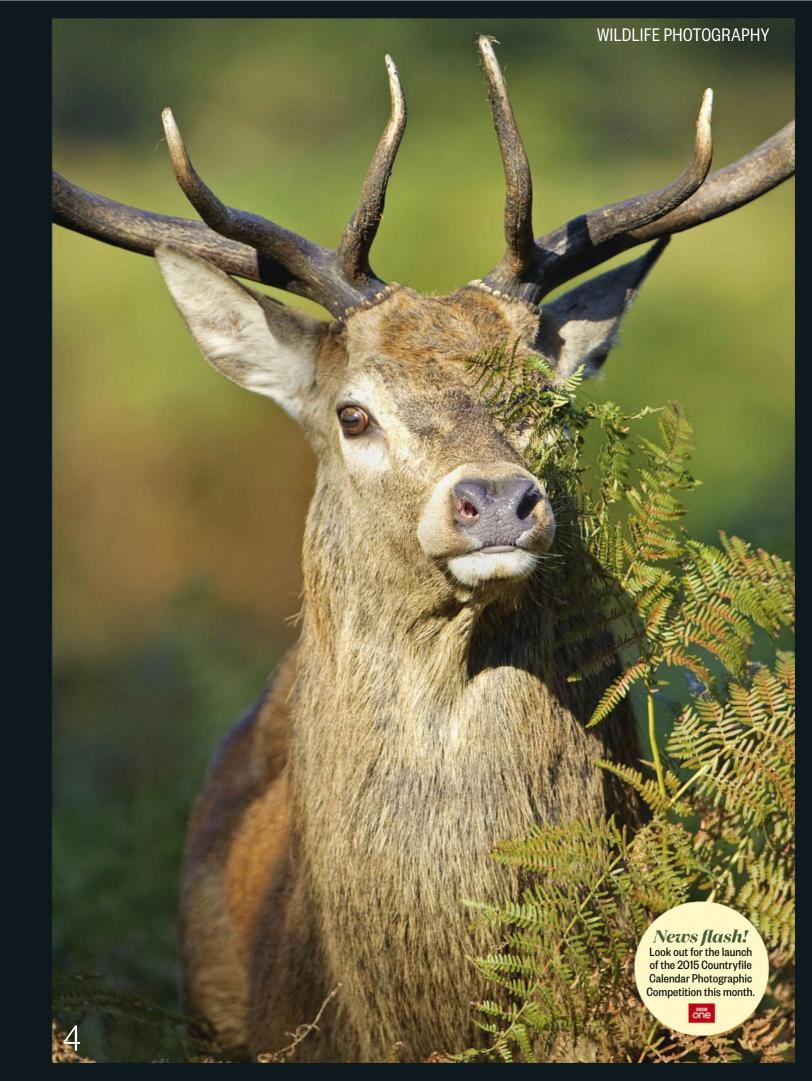
"The background is every bit as important as the subject. It should complement but not compete with the animal you're photographing, and if you can evoke the season, habitat or weather, so much the better. You might need to zoom out or change lenses to achieve the most sympathetic proportions."

#### **3 REPEAT ACTIONS - RED SQUIRREL**

"Watch for repeat behaviour, which will allow you to plan more ambitious shots. You'll need a fast shutter speed to freeze this sort of action - this leaping red squirrel was shot at 1/8000s. If your camera is set to a simpler mode, then select the 'sports' option for dealing with wildlife action."

#### 4 CLOSE UP - RED DEER

"We've already talked about framing wide to show an animal in its environment but sometimes it's good to do the opposite: get in close and frame tight. Strip away all those elements that aren't adding anything to the photograph and concentrate attention on the interesting bits. Often that's the eyes of the subject, but there's no harm in introducing a little mystery by looking elsewhere."



#### **5 LIGHT DIRECTION - PUFFIN**

"Try to be aware of light direction and how it can affect the mood of a photograph. Side lighting helps to show modelling and reveal surface texture, while back light can introduce drama or romance. Make the most of low sunlight at the beginning and end of the day for long shadows and warm glows."

#### **6 FOCAL POINT - MOUNTAIN HARE**

"Consider subject placement carefully, don't just default to the centre point out of convenience. Master the art of 'focus, lock, compose' to break the habit of cross-hairs targeting. Generally speaking, it's best if the animal is looking or moving into space within the shot, rather than out of the frame."

#### 7 STAND BACK - RED KNOT FLOCK

"You don't always need a monster telephoto lens to make great images of wildlife. For example, with murmurations of starlings at dusk or wading birds at their high-tide roost, it's the shape of the flock that's most interesting – it's not important to see plumage detail – and a standard kit lens is often sufficient for this."

#### 8 BAD WEATHER - RED DEER STAGS IN BLIZZARD

"Don't give up when the weather turns bad. Hostile conditions frequently give rise to the best photographs, so long as you can keep yourself and your equipment protected from the elements. Vary your shutter speed during rain and snow, using slower speeds for longer streaks."

# QUICK TWEAKS For instantly better wildlife shots

#### 1. EXPERIMENT WITH VIEWPOINT

Compact cameras and phone cameras, in particular, can get into really tight corners for quirky views.

#### 2. KNOW YOUR LOCAL PATCH

Don't neglect the wealth of subject matter on your doorstep (and this applies to city dwellers too).

#### 3. USE A MONOPOD

If you're stalking birds and animals with a long telephoto lens, a monopod is much quicker than a tripod.

#### 4. BRING YOUR SUBJECTS TO YOU

Make your garden wildlife-friendly.

#### **5. USE YOUR CAR AS A HIDE**

Birds and animals don't usually associate vehicles with people, so they don't see them as a threat.
Use a bean bag on the window ledge to support a long lens.

#### **6. PACK SHOWER CAPS**

They make great see-through waterproof covers for your camera when it rains.

#### 7. MOTOR DRIVE

Use a continuous shutter-release setting to capture sudden bursts of activity.

#### 8. TURN THE CAMERA ON ITS SIDE

Remember to take upright photos from time to time – although this isn't recommended for shooting video!

#### 9. BLACK AND WHITE

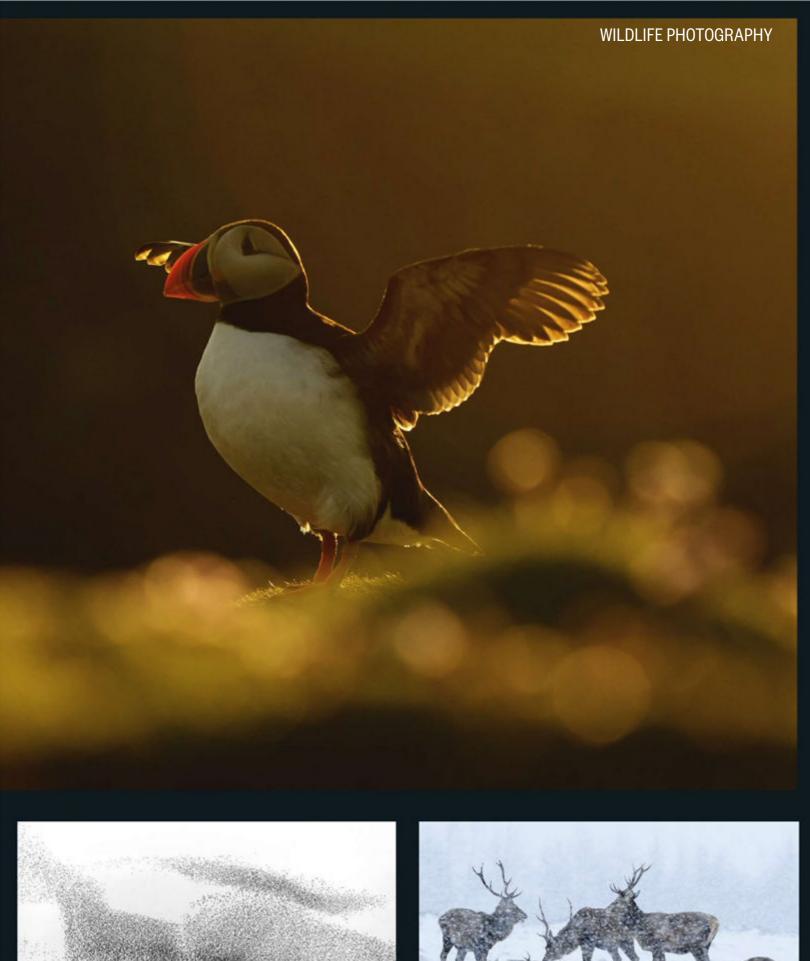
Converting pictures to black and white can help draw attention to pattern and form.

#### 10. LEARN BIRD SONG

It will help you identify and locate subjects (you can cheat by referring to a sound guide app).













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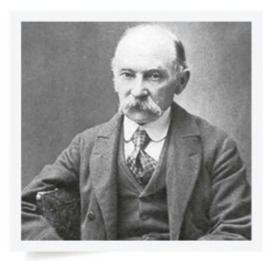
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## HARDY'S HEARTLAND

As the new film adaptation of Far From the Madding Crowd is released, **Maria Hodson** follows in the fictional footsteps of Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba Everdene across the landscape of Thomas Hardy's greatest rural love story

Photos: Philip Hartley

hen Farmer Oak smiled, the corners of his mouth spread till they were within an unimportant distance of his ears, his eyes were reduced to chinks and diverging wrinkles appeared round them, extending upon his countenance like the rays in a rudimentary sketch of the rising sun."

I'm mad about Far From the Madding Crowd. It's my favourite book, and has been since I read it as a gangly teenager. The combination of romance, humour, humanity, fine writing, wild characters and unbridled nature won my heart, and continues to hold it.

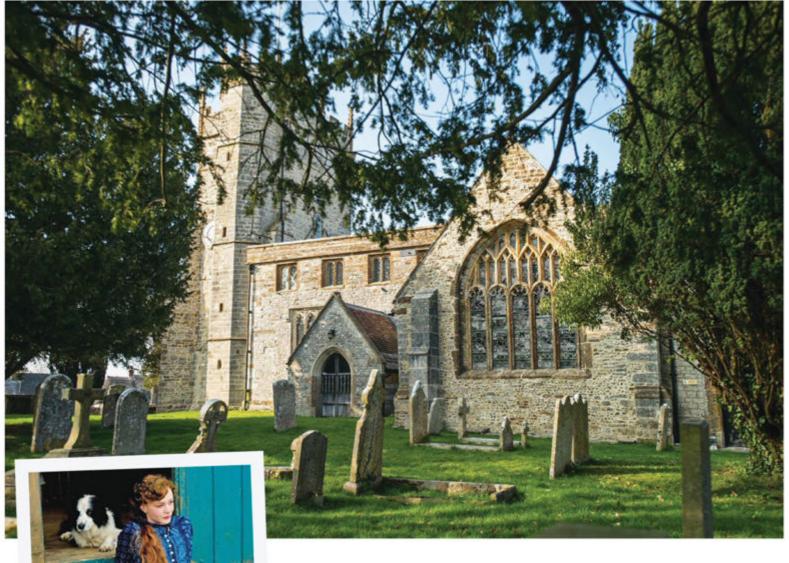
I am not alone in adoring it. The book flew off the shelves on publication in 1874, and this year has seen the release of a new film starring Carey Mulligan as Bathsheba, as well as the re-release of the 1967 version starring Julie Christie. So why has the tale retained such appeal over the years?

The reason is essentially romance. Not only the romance between the characters, but also the romanticisation of the landscape. Thomas Hardy's fourth novel but first literary success, Far From the Madding Crowd gave the Victorian readers a rural idyll to yearn for and moon over. In the book, Hardy first introduces the fictional county of Wessex, an imaginary landscape into which he wove real-life locations with which he was familiar, predominantly based around Dorset. As he notes, Wessex is "partly real, partly dream".

To pay homage to Hardy's wistful novel, I wanted to explore the landscape that inspired it and contemplate how it has changed. This is not the landscape that appears in the film, which features spectacular locations such as the Jurassic Coast, but the specific places Hardy had in mind when he wrote the work. I'm assisted in this venture by Sue Clarke from the Thomas Hardy Society, and local ecologist Dr Ryan Walker and his Jack Russell Otto.







TOP St Mary's Church, Puddletown - the model for Weatherbury Church ABOVE Carey Mulligan stars as spirited Bathsheba in the recent film adaptation by Thomas Vinterberg

At the time of Hardy's writing, Britain was reeling from rapid industrialisation, which had seen vast swathes of former country dwellers pushed into urban environments for work. When Hardy was born in 1840, 20% of the workforce were employed in agriculture - by 1900, fewer than 10% were. Many readers in Hardy's time mourned this transformation, as many people do today. A perceived simplicity of life had vanished.

Hardy sets Far From the Madding Crowd in the warmth of a Wessex untouched by industrialisation and thus distanced from the 'madding' (frenzied) pace of urban centres. Born and raised in a cottage near Higher Bockhampton, Dorset, in the heart of rolling countryside, Hardy uses memories of his pastoral boyhood to transport readers to a former time. In his introduction, Hardy rues the decline of traditional country customs

and holds "the recent supplanting of the class of stationary labourers" responsible for the loss of "local history, folklore, close-intersocial relations and eccentric individualities".

**VILLAGE LIFE** 

The walk starts on a delightfully sunny day at Puddletown, which Hardy used as his template for Weatherbury, a village that stands almost outside time, unsullied by the ragings of modernity: "In comparison with cities, Weatherbury was immutable. The citizen's 'then' is

the rustic's 'now'." In Hardy's Wessex, time moves reassuringly slowly and old traditions are retained.

We congregate at St Mary's Church, which was built in about 1400. Sue explains that Hardy's family had connections with the church - his

"Weatherbury

stands almost

outside time,

unsullied by

the ragings of

modernity"

father and grandfather played the fiddle and cello in the gallery - and the building provides the model for Weatherbury Church in the novel, where Sergeant Troy spends the night in the rain by Fanny Robin's

grave. The gargoyles that wash away the bulbs that Troy plants in grief are still visible on the church's exterior.

Spying the odd thatched roof, we wander further through the lanes of Puddletown, where places akin to

'Warren's Malthouse' would once have

TOP Druce Farm, which provided the model for Farmer Boldwood's farm, which Hardy describes as standing "recessed from the road" with stables "lost amid bushes of laurel" BOTTOM Ryan, Maria, Sue and Otto in the grounds of Waterston Manor

been found, providing a hub for the men of the village to gather and drink.

Hardy's writing chimes with warm observations of these local gatherings. At Warren's Malthouse, Gabriel Oak and his fellow farmhands glug from the God Forgive Me, a "two-handled tall mug standing in the ashes, cracked and charred with heat". As Gabriel is a newcomer, the maltster commands that "a clane cup for the shepherd" be found, but Oak rebuffs this: "'No, not at all,' said Gabriel, in a reproving tone of considerateness. I never fuss about dirt in its pure state, and when I know what sort it is:" This attitude confirms Gabriel to his fellows as "a right sensible man". For there's nothing wrong with a bit of good old-fashioned muck.

#### **FARMING COUNTRY**

A clamour of rooks provide a raucous soundtrack as the footpath weaves through fields – this remains heavily agrarian country. Through the trees, dotted with oak, ash and field maple, Sue points out the unassuming Druce Farm, the model for Farmer Boldwood's Little Weatherbury Farm.

Farmer Boldwood is an intriguing character – a tenant farmer, his person is "the nearest approach to aristocracy that this remoter quarter of the parish could boast of". He is oblivious to female attention until Bathsheba, in a fit of playful pique, sends him a valentine, transporting poor Farmer Boldwood into the depths of romantic anguish and ultimately proving his undoing.

A buzzard swoops overhead as we continue to Waterston Manor, the inspiration for Bathsheba Everdene's Upper Weatherbury Farm. Hardy's father was a mason and Hardy trained as an architect until his early 30s, when the success of Far From the Madding Crowd allowed him to retire to focus solely on writing. His eye for architecture is evident in his writing, and although he admits to moving the fine old Jacobean building "a witch's ride of a mile or more from its actual position", he says that otherwise "its







A recently laid hedge in the traditional Dorset style. This old country craft provides good protection to crops and wildlife. www.dorset-hedgelayer.co.uk

### HARDY'S HEDGES

Along the way Ryan points out the overgrown remains of laid hedges, which would have been the norm in Hardy's day. This traditional form of hedgerow management – which in Dorset involves trees being part sliced and laid horizontally to form a living fence to keep stock in – has been in steep decline since Hardy's time.

The humble hedge is very present in the story. At the outset of the novel, callow sheepdog Young George chases Gabriel's flock through a gap in a hedge to their demise at the foot of a chalk pit. Hedges also act as a romantic curtain, over which Gabriel plays peeping tom on his beloved Bathsheba, and set the scene for Farmer Boldwood and Sergeant Troy's battle of wills over their claim to the bold beauty. The tangled remnants of laid hedges that we spy have not been maintained for over a hundred years, but shelter traditional hedgerow species such as bullfinches and yellowhammers.

LEFT Hardy ha ha: Ryan and Maria at the stone memorial, marking the works that Hardy wrote in his cottage in Higher Bockhampton

features are described as they still show themselves to the sun and moonlight".

Sadly, Waterston Manor suffered a fire in 1863 and was partly remodelled in 1911, but aspects of the architecture Hardy describes remain intact. The house was regarded as a local jewel in his day, and still is. Hardy often gives his characters residences that reflect their temperaments – hence Upper Weatherbury Farm (Waterston Manor) is quirky and beautiful, like Bathsheba.

In the tale, Bathsheba Everdene inherits Upper Weatherbury Farm and takes it on in her unconventional and spirited way, by running it herself as a single woman. She is an example of the greater social mobility the countryside afforded – "perhaps her air was the inevitable result of the social rise that had advanced her from cottage to a large house and fields" – and of slowly changing times in gender roles, for she represents that rarity: a female farmer.

Bathsheba, of course, is unperturbed by this challenge: "Now mind, you have a mistress instead of a master. I don't yet know my powers or my talents in farming; but I shall do my best, and if you serve me well, so I shall serve you... I shall be up before you are awake. I shall be afield before you are up. I shall have breakfasted before you are afield. In short, I shall astonish you all."

#### INTO THE WOODS

Bidding goodbye to Sue, we set off along a stretch of the Ridgeway. Red admirals, brimstones and small tortoiseshell butterflies flutter above primrosestrewn paths as we wend our way to Hardy's Cottage through the ancient woodland of Thorncombe Wood and cool coverage of Puddletown Forest.

This modest cottage was built of cob and thatch by Hardy's grandfather in 1800. Here Hardy was born and here he wrote Far From the Madding Crowd – you can look out over the pretty garden from his desk. A stuffed red squirrel sits on the mantelpiece – when Hardy was writing, the woods would have been full of red squirrels, before the North American grey arrived to usurp them.

Behind the cottage stand conifer plantations, mixed woodland and



patches of heathland – as Ryan explains, the plantations came later, and heathland would have covered most of the area in Hardy's day.

Formed on the chalky soil found in Dorset and Hampshire, heathland is now one of our rarest habitats.

Dominated by heather, gorse and sedges, this unique habitat was produced by traditional grazing practices. Dorset's heathland once covered 50,000 hectares but today its fragmented heaths total around 7,000 hectares. It's a haven for wildlife, providing shelter for warblers, woodlarks, nightjars and reptiles.

Hardy extols the connection between man and nature. The quiet hero of the novel is Gabriel Oak, a man who can foretell the weather by observing the behaviour of wildlife and who is admired by his peers for his uncanny knowledge: "We hear ye can tell the time as well by the stars as we can by the sun and the moon, shepherd!" His connection with nature is deep-rooted, born of a life outdoors. It marks him out as a man of substance, as opposed

to Sergeant Troy's folly and arrogance, proven when Oak singlehandedly saves Bathsheba's wheat and barley ricks from the approaching storm while Troy gets the farm workers royally drunk: "Oak knew he was right, and that Troy was wrong. Every voice in nature was unanimous in bespeaking change."

To Hardy, a connection to the natural world is paramount, and a man in tune with the environment is a man attuned to himself. It is Gabriel Oak who finally wins independent Bathsheba's heart forever, through his loyalty, stoicism and good nature.

As we walk further into the forest, a great spotted woodpecker hops up a trunk and a kestrel soars past. By the time we arrive back in Puddletown to relax in a modern-day malthouse (the local pub), I'm more in love with Far From the Madding Crowd than ever.



Production editor **Maria Hodson** loves a literary landscape. Watch her *Mad About Far From the Madding Crowd* video on **www.countryfile.com** 

TOP Hardy's Cottage, where Hardy grew up, was built by his grandfather in 1800 ABOVE Puddletown Forest was once covered in rare heathland – Hardy called the area Egdon Heath

#### **EXPLORE HARDY'S WESSEX**

Hardy's Cottage in Higher Bockhampton is owned by the National Trust.
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardys-cottage/
The Hardy Society holds events and walks in the area. www.hardysociety.org
Dorset County Museum in Dorchester offers an exhibition about Hardy's life and times.
www.dorsetcountymuseum.org

Maria stayed at **Swallows** cottage in Hampton, Dorchester. A week's stay for up to four people, from £475. www.premiercottages.co.uk







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## **ROAMING IN THE GLOAMING**

Long summer evenings offer you the chance to explore the countryside after work – from dusky wildlife sightings to relaxing drinks with a great view



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Your handy guide to this month's Great Day Out

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## **01 WATCH BADGERS**

PEAK DISTRICT

As dusk falls, **Roly Smith** gets into position to witness the magical emergence of these secretive woodland creatures



t's a balmy June evening, and as an enormous, Tenko-red sun slowly sinks below the horizon, we carefully pick our way across the cow-patted White Peak pasture towards a silhouetted ash wood. We make a special note of the direction of the gentle wind – it's coming from the south-west – as we approach the wood. It will determine our positioning and choice of vantage point.

Just as we enter the wood, a red fox skulks across a corner of the field, its russet fur and white-tipped brush glowing in the declining sun. It alerts a 'building' of rooks in the highest branches of the ashes, which takes flight in a chorus of raucous cawing.

Once in the darker confines of the wood, we notice almost immediately an enormous bank of bare earth, which looks for all the world as if a mechanical digger has been at large. But no, this gigantic platform is the work of several generations of our evening's objective – badgers.

#### **BROCK AROUND THE CLOCK**

June is a great time of year to observe these charming and handsome animals. This is the magical moment when badger

"We watch the dark sett with an increasing sense of anticipation"

cubs emerge above ground for the first time and start to play, learning the skills that will serve them in later life.

The first essential for a successful badger watch is to get there early before the badgers head out. Make sure you wear warm, dark but quiet clothing that doesn't rustle too much. Always wait downwind of the badger sett – their sense of

smell is reckoned to be 800 times better than ours.

Thankfully the wind is blowing into our faces as we step quietly and cautiously behind a large grey ash bole above and to the right of the sett. We settle down as comfortably as we can for what might be a long wait: it may be

> some time before we are able to stretch our limbs again.

By now we can see three large holes gaping above

and behind the pile of excavated earth, with two or three well-worn paths leading through the dog's mercury and ramsoms under the trees, away from them. Nothing else to do now but wait.

We watch the dark entrances to the sett with an increasing sense of anticipation. The conditions are fine and we've been careful in our

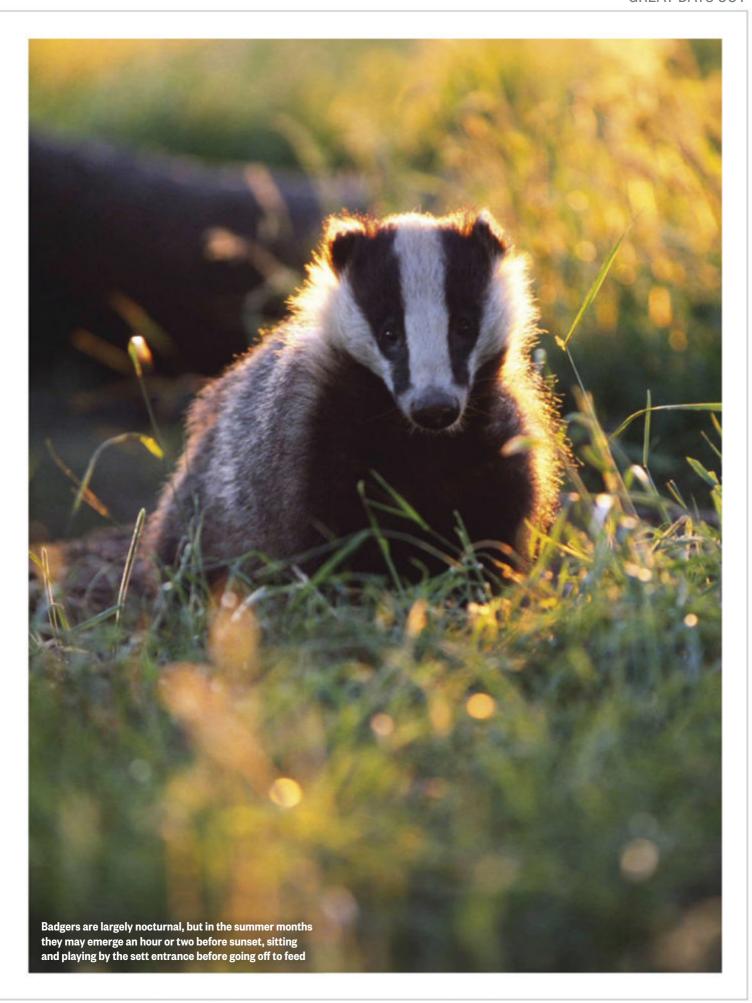


#### **BADGERS IN FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE**

"We are an enduring lot, and we may move out for a time, but we wait, and are patient, and back we come. And so it will ever be."
The Badger in Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows (1908)

From Kenneth Grahame's crusty old countryman in *The Wind in the Willows* to Rupert the Bear's companion Bill Badger in Nutwood and Tommy Brock in Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Mr Tod*, the badger has featured strongly in children's literature and is familiar to many of us. The old country name of 'brock' has given rise to many placenames in the countryside, such as Brockholes, Lancashire; Brockham, Surrey; Broxbourne, Hertfordshire and Broxted, Essex.

And the common verb 'to badger' has echoes of the bad old days of badger-baiting, thankfully now illegal. The Government's controversial programme of culling badgers in a bid to stop the spread of bovine TB continues in the West Country.



www.countryfile.com/walks 73



approach: surely it won't be too long before the badgers appear?

Then, just as our limbs start to stiffen and we think our luck is out, we hear a low, muffled yelping sound coming from one of the holes. Our experienced guide whispers that it sounds like the cubs are eager to come out and play.

It's very important, especially when the badgers first emerge, that you keep perfectly still. As we all hold our respective breaths, something vaguely white appears from the depths of a hole. And suddenly – there it is! The Everton-mint, black-and-white striped face of a boar badger appears at the entrance, cautiously sniffing the air to the left and right with its moist, shiny black nose.

But just as suddenly, it's gone. Did it sense our presence and decide against risking an appearance? No, after a few minutes out it comes again, and as it sits contentedly at the entrance having a good old scratch, we notice for the first time its white-tipped ears, its bearlike, hunchback shape and massive paws.

### "We grin at each other in the sheer pleasure of watching these wonderful animals"

Finally it turns towards the sett entrance as if to say: "Come on, what are you waiting for?" to the rest of the family. Another face appears, the female this time, and she also cautiously sniffs the air for any sign of danger. But the coast is clear, and she is almost immediately followed by her two fluffy-furred, snub-nosed cubs.

After a brief grooming by

their mother, the two cubs start playing, nipping their mum's coat, chasing their tails, then rolling over and tumbling down the side of the sett. It's a joyous scene, and we grin stupidly at each other from the sheer pleasure of

> watching these wonderful animals at such close quarters. By this

By this time the boar

has made off for an evening's foraging and it's not long before mum and the cubs follow him. As darkness sets in, we finally stretch our legs and head for the welcoming flask of hot drink in the car.



**Roly Smith**is an award-winning
journalist, known in
his home territory
as "Mr Peak District."

### WHERE TO WATCH BADGERS

Find out more about where to watch badgers by visiting the website of the Badger Trust:

www.badgertrust.org.uk.

Many county wildlife trusts have specialist badger groups, and some recommended badgerwatching groups include:

Oxfordshire College Barn Farm, Sibford Gower, Banbury 01295 780352; www.badger-watch.com

Dorset Badger and Wildlife Watch, Old Henley Farm, Buckland Newton, Dorchester DT2 7BL. 01300 345293; www.badgerwatch dorset.co.uk

Cheshire Wirral and Cheshire Badger Group 01925 656188; www.wcbg.org.uk

Yorkshire Dalby Forest, North Yorkshire 01723 367864 www. friendsofdalbyforest.org.uk

## **02 LAGGAN LOCKS**

CALEDONIAN CANAL, HIGHLANDS

Enjoy the summer evenings to the full with a floating inn and some roamin' in the gloamin' by Scotland's Caledonian Canal, says **Fergal MacErlean** 

cotland's summer twilight, or gloaming, has to be seen to be believed. Its ethereal, seemingly endless quality gives a magical and romantic feel to the warmer months north of the border. With darkness consigned to a couple of hours in the middle of the night, there's plenty of time to amble about. And if you start out from or end up at the Eagle Barge Inn at Laggan Locks, you can wine and dine under the stars, too.

The legendary entertainer Sir Harry Lauder captured the joy of strolling in the late summer evening with his sweetheart in his 1911 love song "Roamin' in the Gloamin". The title comes from the chorus: Roamin' in the gloamin' on the bonny banks o' Clyde Roamin' in the gloamin' with my lassie by my side When the sun has gone to rest That's the time that we love best Ah, it's lovely roamin' in the gloamin'

### **ON WATER AND WING**

You'll find the Caledonian Canal just as beautiful as the sky on a warm night, especially if you follow the towpath from the South Laggan Locks. This part of the Thomas Telford-designed canal is home to the Eagle Barge Inn – a floating Dutch barge that is popular with tourists and locals alike.

You can follow the towpath north towards Laggan for a mile and a half to reach the swingbridge by pretty Loch Oich. There you can woo your loved one or, with friends, just enjoy the splendid setting in the Great Glen. Mute swans paint a picture as they sail on the mercurial waters. You might even be lucky enough to see eagles or ospreys on the wing. Do bring midge spray – especially if there's no wind.

Returning to South Laggan and the welcoming barge you could opt to share the heaped seafood platter - one of a number of good choices among the bar and evening



meals on offer. Live traditional music is a feature on this sturdy, pot-riveted old canal barge, which was used as a troop carrier in World War II.

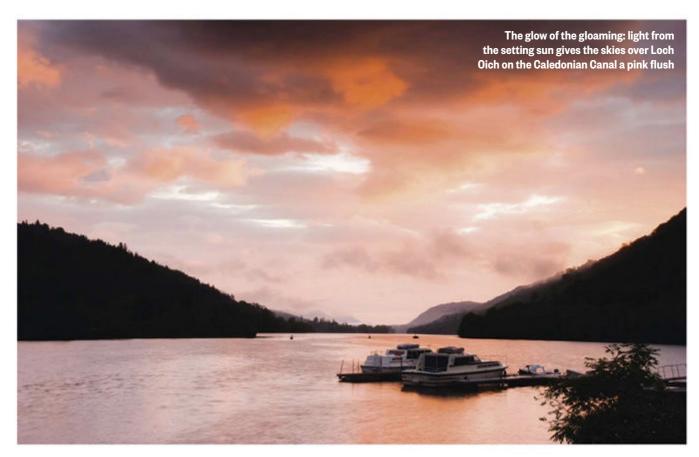
With your feet tapping under a crimson Caledonian sky, it's a fine place to relish the unfolding summer.

### **FURTHER INFO**

Eagle Barge Inn, Laggan Locks, South Laggan, Near Invergarry, Inverness-shire PH34 4EA 07789 858567 www.eaglebargeinn.weebly.com



Fergal MacErlean is an outdoors writer who loves exploring Scotland by bike and shanks pony.



hoto: Alamy





### 03 CROMER

NORFOLK

Catch a stunning show as both sunrise and sunset appear by a pier, says **Mark Rowe** 



ou don't have to climb a mountain to enjoy sunrise and sunset shows of great drama. The pier at Cromer can offer that too. Due to the slightly disorienting geography of north Norfolk, Cromer's pier sticks out north by northeast into the North Sea, so you can see the sun both rise and tumble towards the sea. Time your visit for a clear day and windless day and you are in for a treat.

Perhaps only the hardiest will get up (or stay up) for the true dark of 2.30 am to see the full sequence of change from night to half-light to daylight. 4.30 am will do. By then, in midsummer, the sun will have begun its journey across Norfolk's skies. On a global scale, the North Sea is tiny. The rising sun makes it seem like a vast ocean.

### **SQUABBLE OF SEAGULLS**

Much is made of the woodland dawn chorus at this time of year, but the coastal chorus is striking, too. It's perhaps a little eerie, with those gulls not yet paired up raucously breaking the silence. Newly fledged sparrow chicks line up plaintively on the pier railings, hopping and scuttling chirpily after their parents.

There are other reasons for liking Cromer's pier: you don't pay for the privilege of stepping foot on it, as you must at so many other piers around the UK. Come morning, families are happily fishing and dropping lines for crabs, and at its far end, rather than an amusement aroade, there's a lifeboat station.

78

From the railings of the pier you can see the undulating four-mile coastal path that heads west to Sheringham, Cromer's neighbour and rival for the seaside tourist shilling. This walk can be a lovely way to pass the hours between dawn and dusk and also gives the lie to the myth that Norfolk is spirit-level flat. You can either walk back to Cromer the same way, or hop on the branch line.

### **LIGHTHOUSE & LIFEBOATS**

There's a charm to Cromer that lifts the spirits even without the intervention of the sun of high summer. Art galleries lie in wait with their evocative seascapes, there's a lighthouse and the Henry Blogg lifeboat museum. Named for Cromer's revered coxswain and the RNLI's most decorated lifeboatman, it has a 1930s lifeboat and genuinely impressive displays. The Rocket House cafe on the top floor is great too, though they miss an opportunity by not opening beyond 5pm.

As the sun begins to slowly sink behind Cromer's yardarm, it steadily fills the Wash with a staggering gold sheen, as if molten metal were being dispensed from a pot. Come along on the right evening and it really does seem as though the sea is on fire. Then the half light returns, and then darkness, for just a few hours.



Mark Rowe is a journalist specialising in travel, wildlife and environmental issues.



















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# 04 TAKE A BOAT RIDE TO A PERFECT SUNSET ST MAWES, CORNWALL

Catch the last rays of a sunny day on a stretch of the Cornish coast that has it all – a ferry ride, great views and fantastic food and drinks, says **Nicola Smith** 





here are few more magical places to celebrate the welcome return of sultry summer evenings than motoring across the waves as Falmouth's undulating skyline recedes and the majestic form of Pendennis Castle comes into view.

The passenger ferry (www. falriver.co.uk) runs between the Cornish seaside town of **Falmouth** and the small fishing harbour of **St Mawes**. It takes just 20 minutes, leaving Prince of Wales Pier and taking in the views over the village of **Flushing**, sweeping past Falmouth's impressive docks and heading out to the Carrick Roads. I have often seen dolphins and basking sharks put on a show for ferry passengers in this stretch of

water, ducking and diving as their captive audience squeals with delight. Rounding Pendennis' twin, **St Mawes Castle** (both were built by Henry VIII), you quickly arrive in the attractive St Mawes harbour – a short walk from the understated Tresanton Hotel, boasting a terrace tailor-made for a sundowner... (see box)

### **KEEP LOOK OUT**

Brainchild of renowned hotelier, Olga Polizzi, the Tresanton has evolved from its origins as a waterside yachtsmen's club to an indulgent hideaway (it boasts its own cinema and even its own yacht), with views across to **St Anthony's Lighthouse**.

As the theatre of the sunset unfolds, it is unlikely you will want to leave this wondrous spot after just a cocktail. Instead, slip inside to the restaurant with its floor-toceiling windows and watch as the sky darkens and the distant lighthouse calls across the water.

#### **SEASIDE RISE**

Stay the night in one of the decadently furnished rooms (room 29 boasts a huge picture window framing **St Anthony's Head** across the water) and wake to the seagulls calling and the sun rising over the sea, with the whole of Cornwall before you and ready for a full day of exploring.



Nicola Smith has been a freelance journalist for over 12 years and is based in Cornwall.

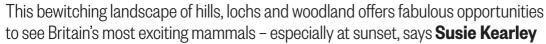


### **TIME FOR A TIPPLE?**

My favourite place to watch the sun sink to the west is the terrace - an idyllic spot to enjoy one of the cocktails for which the Tresanton is known. Try the Tresanton Sour, comprising campari, galliano, cranberry, grapefruit and lemon, or the Virgin Mary, made with a closely guarded secret recipe, and sip away as you watch the last of the sailing boats drift home. St Mawes, Cornwall TR25DR 01326 270 055 www.tresanton.com

## **05 DUSK WILDLIFE SAFARI**

ROTHIEMURCHUS ESTATE, CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK





Speyside Wildlife
'Dusk Watch', on the
Rothiemurchus
Estate in the Cairngorms
National Park, will bring you
face to face with pine
martens, badgers and wood
mice. You might even see an
owl or two.

But only if you take the right precautions. Silence is paramount and beeping gadgets and bright, rustling clothes are banned. No flash photography is permitted but with a decent camera you'll still be able to capture some enchanting pictures.

#### **DINING AFTER DARK**

A professional guide leads small groups through the darkening landscape to a hide, outside of which are feeding stations for the various animals that live on the estate. On the day I go, the atmosphere is one of tense anticipation. All eyes are peeled for the night's first visitor, and before long, he appears – it's a wood mouse! He runs up between a crack in the rocks for some peanuts.

Next comes a badger and then a pine marten, who devours some nuts before running off with an egg. All three species come and go all evening, passing just inches from the window. I feel very privileged to have seen the wildlife at such close quarters.



Susie Kearley
is a Buckinghamshirebased writer who
enjoys travelling the
UK to see wildlife.

### WHAT TO SPOT AT ROTHIEMURCHUS



### **PINE MARTEN**

The pine marten is a relative of the weasel and the population is thriving in the Scottish Highlands. It was hunted to near extinction in England in the 19th century although numbers are increasing today.



### **RED DEER**

Red deer are the biggest deer species in Britain. The stags stand around 120cm tall to the shoulder and are majestic creatures with huge antlers that have up to 12 branches. The does are smaller and less striking.



#### **BADGER**

These beautiful creatures are Britain's largest land carnivore, although worms form the majority of their diet. They live a mostly nocturnal lifestyle, leaving their setts at dusk in order to find food.



### **ROE DEER**

Roe deer graze on the hills around the Rothiemurchus hide. They are small creatures with long, elegant legs. The bucks have short antlers that fall off in winter but grow back in spring and summer.



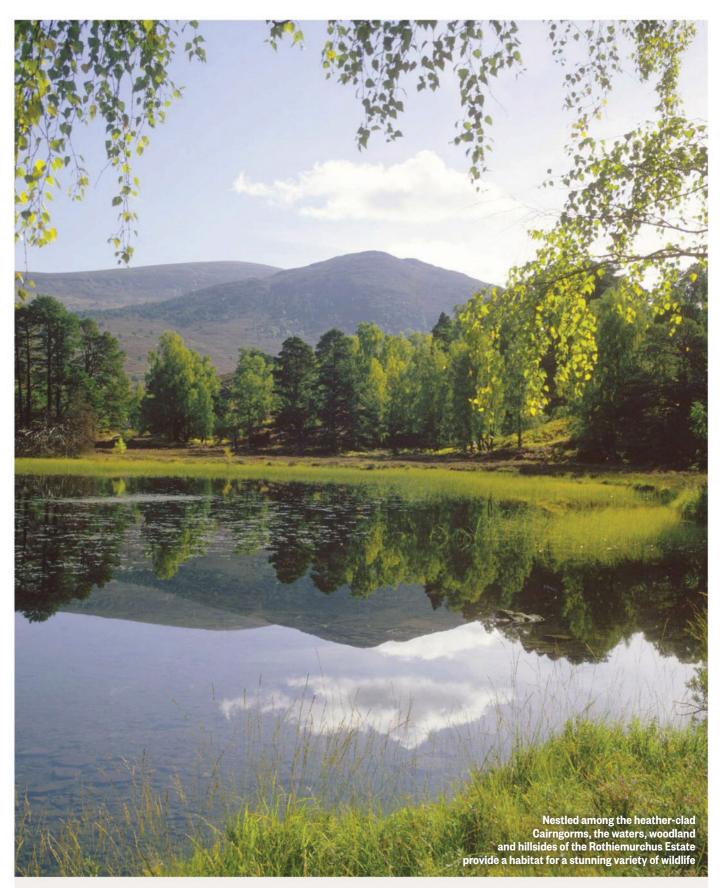
#### **TAWNY OWLS**

Tawny owls have been known to take mice from right outside the Rothiemurchus hide. The birds are pigeon-sized with brown feathers and are widespread in England, Wales and Scotland.



### OTHER SPECIES

The Cairngorms National Park is also home to golden eagles, puffins, otters and the Scottish crossbill, among others. Speyside Wildlife offers a range of 'safaris' where visitors can see these inspiring creatures.



### **SPEYSIDE WILDLIFE**

The Rothiemurchus Hide can be booked nightly from Easter to October, and less regularly fom November to Easter. There's a maximum of 12 people in the hide, so booking is essential. Adults £25, children (8-14) £15. Wester Camerorie Ballieward, Grantown on Spey, Cairngorms National Park, Scotland PH26 3PR 01479 812498, www.speysidewildlife.co.uk



Magellan cruises north along Norway's fjord- and island-dotted coastline, calling at several wonderful places as she goes in search of the mysterious spectacle of the Aurora Borealis, the celestial phenomenon that has bewitched, enchanted and entranced generations.

Departing from Tilbury on 9 October, 2015. From £1,849 per person.

### Includes:

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# To book, call **0330 160 7769** and quote code RTI

## **06 NIGHTJAR WALKS**

BODGYNYDD NATURE RESERVE, NORTH WALES

The whirring, churring call of these summer visitors fills the evening air with the sound of the sub-Sahara. **Julie Brominicks** takes a walk on the dark side



n one magical moment a pair skimmed down, silent weightless spectres in the half-light, to hover and drink in a dew pond." Richard Mabey

Nightjar encounters make you tingle. Perhaps it's because they are so rare - these summer migrants visit Britain just briefly, to breed. They are endangered; habitat-loss, pesticides and colder wetter springs are the culprits. Nightjars are hidden by day in bracken roosts by their cappuccino plumage. Perhaps it's because they glide as quietly as owls, flying without a whisper of sound, that you shiver. Crepuscular birds, they are only active in the dark.

### **OUT OF AFRICA**

Or perhaps it's because they seem to bring with them a hint of Africa. The males' territorial 'churring' call drifts through summer nights like cicadas, or a swamp of tropical frogs. One of their Welsh folk-names alludes to this whirring mechanical croak. It is Aderyn y droell, or 'spinning-wheel bird'.

Although they are most numerous in southern England, Wales is somewhere you can see nightjars, and Bodgynydd Nature Reserve, high in the Gwydir Forest three miles north-west of Betws-y-Coed, is one such place. The reserve comprises a mosaic of heath, scrub, bracken-covered slopes, clear-fell, mixed woodland, wetland and lakes, and occupies a plateau overlooked by the Snowdonia Mountains. Especially it is Moel Siabod, with its



distinctive, almost Fuji-like profile, which dignifies the arena where club moss, royal fern, sundew, butterwort and bladderwort thrive, bats flit and snipe drum.

### **JUNE TROPICS**

Guided nightjar walks take place here every June. Participants gather in late light and walk through forest corridors of warm and cool air, emerging to see the sun setting over the lake. The scent of pines gives way to smells of bog myrtle, wet swamp and dry rock. It is in this dusky arena that nightjars, silently and swiftly, begin their agile spirit-flight, feeding on moths, flies, beetles and crane-flies.

Sitting on a rock still warm from the day, you can sometimes hear the co-ik call of the male to the female, or the slap of wings behind his back. Sometimes you glimpse the white spots on his tail-feathers. But mostly, in this amphitheatre of rock and lake and swamp, on a sultry June night, you listen to the churring sound like spinning-wheels and frogs, think of the tropics, and tingle.



**Julie Brominicks** is a Snowdonia-based landscape writer and walker.



# **07 SURFING AND CAMPING**

SWANSEA BAY, GLAMORGAN

Stuck in the office on a sunny day? Chuck a surfboard in the car and head to the glorious Gower after work for some ocean therapy, says **Sian Lewis** 

write this sitting at my desk at *BBC Countryfile Magazine* Towers. The sun is streaming in through the window and it's hard not to wish myself outdoors.

Working 9-5 can be tough on the soul, especially in summer, but I've got a failsafe survival strategy – hightailing it to the coast for a dip in the ocean as soon as the last bell goes.

For me, surfing is the most satisfying of microadventures.

All you need is a board and a wetsuit and you can go from office to sea swell in no time. Surfing clears your head, takes you to incredible open spaces and it's fantastic fun, too. I can leave work in Bristol at five and be in the sea at seven, with hours of sunshine left and nothing to do but catch a wave or two.

And there's nowhere more glorious to head to than Swansea Bay for an evening surf and then a sleep under canvas next to the Celtic Sea.

### **WELCOMING WATERS**

Arriving in Swansea Bay always feels like escaping from real life – cross the Severn and fly past the belching steel works at Port Talbot and suddenly you're in chilled-out Mumbles, where cosy cottages and ice-cream shops sit gazing out at the sea.

I love to surf at Caswell Bay – it's a friendly, safe beach for

beginners and it's incredibly beautiful, too, sheltered between cliffs that glow gold with gorse flowers in late spring.

The first step on to the soft, silvery sand makes me instantly forget the working day. There's no better sight than watching the sun turn the sand a rich umber and other surfers become silhouettes as they make their way towards the water with boards tucked under their arms.

;







ABOVE LEFT Cockle shells: the Gower coastline is rich in wildlife ABOVE RIGHT Sian gets ready to take to the water BELOW Steady as she goes! After a few practice runs, Sian catches the crest of a wave... briefly.



Don't have your own board? No problem. are based at Caswell all year round and can be rung up any time to come and kit you up with a board and a wetsuit for £20 for an hour. They also offer lessons – I first learned to surf

"The first step on to the soft sand makes me instantly forget the working day"

with their easygoing instructors and I was instantly hooked on trying (and usually failing) to ride Welsh waves.

After the sheltered beauty of Caswell, head west along the

coast to wilder **Rhosilli** – it can throng with surfers in the summer but the beach is an incredible four miles of perfect sand, so there's room for everyone. Above the bay is the village of **Llangennith** – a scattering of houses perched

> on moorland grazed by wild ponies. There's only one pub, but luckily it's the fabulous King's Head

- the perfect place to watch the sun set over the cliffs.

As night falls it's time to bed down in a tent. This corner of Wales is full of friendly campsites, all mercifully peaceful on a weeknight. Bank Farm is great for families, while Three Cliffs Bay will reward you with incredible panoramic views come morning.

It's hard not to sleep well after a salty surf session, and I can't think of a better ritual than drinking in the sight of the sea (plus a cuppa) from a sleeping bag before heading back to real life. You can't help but feeling smug (if a little rumpled) when back at your desk at 9am after your surf adventure.



Sian Lewis
Our adventure-loving
Online Editor thinks
a dip in the sea
solves everything!



### THE KING'S HEAD

A 17th-century coaching inn smack in the middle of Llangennith, the King's Head has a little garden from which to soak up views of the bay in summer. On a balmy evening, sit outside and satisfy your ravenous post-surf hunger with a hearty portion of the pub's delicious grub and a pint of real ale from their own brewery – their Gower Gold is worth the trip to Wales alone. www.kingsheadgower.co.uk

## 8>11 WHERE TO SEE THE SOLSTICE

Think of the summer solstice and the longest day of the year springs to mind, but we forget that it also brings the easiest night of the year to stay up until dawn. Watch the sun set and rise at these choice locations, says **Emma Field** 



# 8. BEST FOR A CITYSCAPE SOLSTICE: ARTHUR'S SEAT, EDINBURGH

The exposed, almost polished rock at the summit of Arthur's Seat is a surprisingly wild spot just a short walk from Edinburgh's old town. At 251m, this is the highest of Edinburgh's seven hills and as such offers clear views of the other six, as well as Leith and across the Firth of Forth to Fife. The viewpoint is popular for sunrises and sunsets regardless of the solstice, so expect to share the space with a lively crowd.



### 9. BEST FOR A SEA-BOUND SOLSTICE: SALTWICK BAY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

During summer, a small yet particularly photogenic section of the North Yorkshire coast has the distinction of hosting both sunrise and sunset over the sea. Head for Saltwick, where the sandy beach is flanked by the Northern and Southern Shelves, whose textured rock formations and

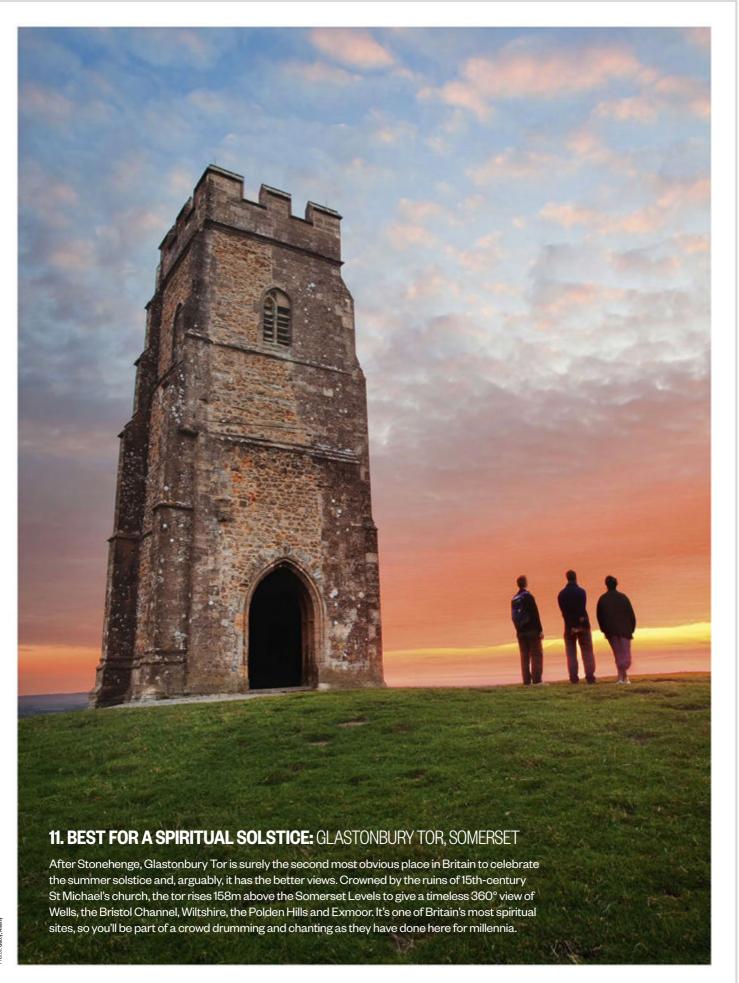
mirror-like pools make for breathtaking reflections. As the sun sets, it picks out the whale-shaped silhouette of Saltwick Nab. On rising, the Black Nab rock stack and the twisted wreck of the *Admiral Von Trump* take centre stage. Just make sure you check tide times.

### **10. BEST FOR A SOLITARY SOLSTICE:**

### PLACE FELL, ULLSWATER

Place Fell isn't notably lofty, but the views from its cairn-riddled plateau contradict its 657 metres. It's cradled to the north and west by Ullswater. The Hellvelyn range to the west is especially brilliant at sunrise, while Hartsop and Kirkstone Pass to the south are at their best as the evening rays steal across them. The 90-minute walk up from Patterdale is relatively easy and you can follow sunrise with a seven-mile circuit back along the lakeshore path, which, according to Wainwright, was "the most beautiful and rewarding walk in Lakeland".





Diotoe Cotty Alan

### GRADE: EASY > DISTANCE: 5 MILES > TIME: 2 HOURS

## 12 GUILDFORD TO GODALMING

SURREY

Spend an evening following a fascinating stretch of the River Wey, complete with locks, houseboats and all-important pub gardens, says **Stephanie Cross** 

eander along the towpath of the tranquil River Wey and your spirits will soon be soothed. As dusk falls, bats skim the deep, green water and deer melt in and out of the undergrowth.

But this stretch of water, known officially as the Godalming Navigation, hasn't always been so peaceful. Since its locks first opened it up to barge traffic back in 1763, it has borne everything from gunpowder to surplus WW1 fighter planes.

### **A** A CURIOUS START

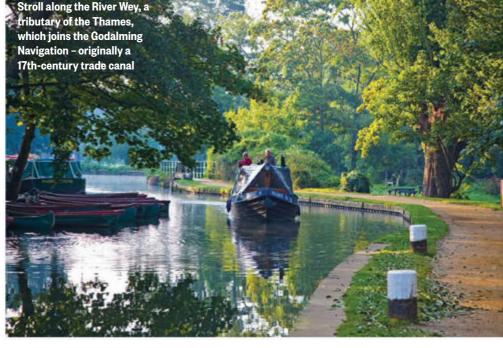
Turn right out of **Guildford** station and head for the town centre via the underpass. Turn right at the river and follow it to the White House pub.

Just beyond, statues of Alice and the White Rabbit commemorate Lewis Carroll's regular visits to his sisters' home in Guildford. Turn left over the latticework bridge, pass the boathouse, then cut across the park to rejoin the towpath at the weir.

### **B** SPRINGS AND SHORES

The wooden Old Ferry footbridge carries the North Downs Way across the river. There's a pretty little spring to your right, and the sandy beach beyond is a treat for toes. Put your shoes back on, keep walking and you'll arrive at **St Catherine's Lock**, the deepest lock on the river.

An imposing railway bridge follows and, a little further on,





a WWII pillbox. At **Broadford Bridge**, take a moment to
stop for some refreshment:
head up on to the road,
follow it around to the left
and you'll find the Parrot Inn
with its busy beer garden
overlooking the green.

### **©** PERFECT PITSTOP

Return to the towpath, pass
Unstead Lock and continue
beside the river through
beautiful water meadows.
Near Broadwater Park, the
beer garden of the Manor Inn
backs on to the towpath –

another chance to enjoy a drink and watch the sun go down. Then cross the lane to **Unstead Park** and continue past the narrowboats of **Farncombe Boat House**.

### **D** BACK TO THE STATION

Continue along the towpath until the river bends right sharply at **Godalming Wharf**. Head up to United Church, left on to the bridge and along Bridge Street.

Bear right onto the High Street and up to the pink 'Pepperpot': Godalming's 1814 Market Hall. Turn right down Church Street, then left into Station Road.



**Stephanie Cross** is a Norfolk-born and raised author and journalist.

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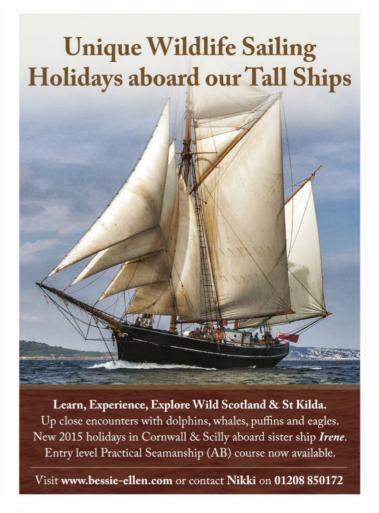


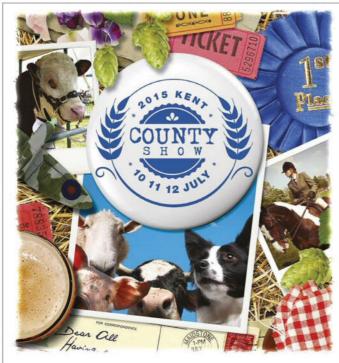




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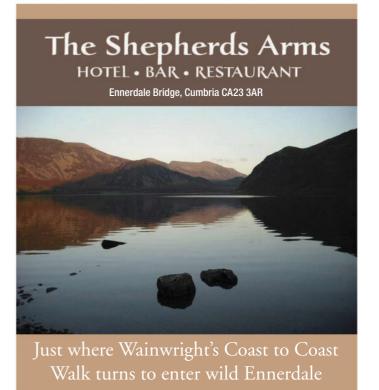




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### YOUR GREAT DAYS OUT... IN PHOTOS

Share your best photos of the British countryside with us and you could see your image in print and win a great prize. Send your images to Your Photos, *BBC Countryfile Magazine*, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN or email photos@countryfile.com

### **→ SHADES OF RED**

By: Julia Amies-Green Where: Winsford Hill, Exmoor

"High up on the moor, the light can be very dramatic and this was no exception. As the sun disappeared, the sky became a very deep red, almost as though the sky itself was on fire. The hedgerow had only just undergone its laying makeover and provided an interesting foreground for the dramatic display of fire."

### > MORE LUCK AT HOME

By: Helen Brassington Where: Attenborough Nature Reserve, Nottinghamshire

"In my 30 years of bird watching, I've never seen a water rail close up. Every weekend I travel miles to try and see these elusive birds, so when I took a trip to a local nature reserve, I really didn't expect to see one. I couldn't believe my eyes when this little fellow just walked out 15 feet in front of me. Lucky me!"





**THE PRIZE** Our winner receives Snugpak's Chrysalis 3 (RRP £89.95) sleeping bag, which weighs just 1600g and shrinks down to a remarkable 26x22cm when packed away, making it very easy to store and take on trips. Offering superb protection in temperatures as low as -5°C, it has the added bonus of an expandable jumbo zip baffle, which provides extra space for the user, and a reading light in the hood for extra convenience! www.snugpak.com



### **▼ TULIPS**

### By: Michael Lambert **Where: Chichester**

"Bishops Palace Garden is a great place to escape the crowds. I like to take close-ups that fill the frame and I love all the colour in this picture."

### ENJOYING THE VIEW

### By: Sylvia Beaumont **Where: North Berwick**

"This Exmoor pony was still furry from the winter months when I encountered him admiring the scenery around North Berwick."



### **▼ STILL WATERS**

### **By: Chris Woods** Where: Ardingly, West Sussex

"I started kayaking last year after my wife bought me one for my 40th birthday. She and the kids walk around Ardingly while I paddle about."

### > OFF THE RAILS

### By: Miles Richardson Where: Staffordshire

"While walking with my family I spotted these catkins on a hazel tree growing on the remains of the Rolleston-on-Dove railway."









### **WEBSITE WINNERS**

### **SELFIE IN THE DONEGAL SURF** By John Dyer

We were looking for your best pictures of outdoors adventures this month. The winner was 'Selfie in the Donegal surf' by John Dyer, who wins a selection of goodies.

Are you a talented snapper? Enter our monthly online photo competition and you could see your image here and win great prizes. Visit: countryfile.com/photography/photo-contest



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# Lazy days

BOOKS > TV > APPS > LETTERS > FARMHOUSE KITCHEN > PUZZLES





### SHEEP FARMING SHORN OF SENTIMENTALITY

The flock – on the fells and in the farmhouse – comes under close scrutiny in this moving tale

### THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE: A TALE OF THE LAKE DISTRICT JAMES REBANKS

PENGUIN, £16.99, ISBN 978 1846148545

I read The Shepherd's Life in one night, it was such a delight. James Rebanks spins a story almost as ancient as the hills themselves, of the shepherding year on a Cumbrian farm - an immemorial cycle of lambing in spring, shearing in summer, sales in autumn and feeding in winter.

Rebanks is no dreamy incomer to the Fells; coming from six

centuries of local farmers he is as 'hefted' to the landscape as the Herdwick sheep he keeps. The Shepherd's Life is shorn of sentimentality in his eyes; this is real upland farming, the Lake District from within. It rains so Biblically the hay rots in the field. "Never mention this to me ever again. I don't want to remember." declares his father in a scene, one of many that lingers in the mind's eye. The Rebanks' farm, we learn, is on the edge - of England, of time and of ruin, because on small farms one disaster can tip you over a

financial cliff more vertiginous than anything in geology.

Having been away to Oxford, James can see his world from without. He is almost sociologically acute on the dynamics of family life on the farm. He knows too the environmental necessity of traditional farming. He has written a tremendous autobiography - of himself but also of a way of life, his family and the Fells. Because ultimately they are indivisible.

John Lewis-Stempel,

author of Meadowland

### BOOK **FEW AND FAR BETWEEN**

CHARLIE ELDER BLOOMSBURY, £11.99 ISBN 978 1472905185



If, like me, you are one of those nerdy types who is genuinely anxious about the fate of the natterjack toad or envies anyone who

spends their life combing rubble heaps in East London for virtually extinct invertebrates, read on.

And even if you aren't, Few and Far Between: On the Trail of Britain's Rarest Animals, by Charlie Elder, might touch a chord or two. Though potentially a bleak tome about species that pepper reports chronicling the catastrophic decline of our wildlife, this is in fact full of verve, wit and optimism.

It's primarily an old-fashioned romp across the country in which Elder meets extraordinary people who have dedicated their lives to preserving moth species most of us have never heard of. There are also quests for an extinct species of sea anemone and an amphibian that inhabits, quite literally, just a few pools in East Anglia.

But Elder is also great company and has an attractive lack of guile, failing to hide his excitement when encountering a smooth snake ("'Yes!' I exclaimed, unable to help myself"), nor his disappointment when a butterfly expert explains how he can't take him to see a Duke of Burgundy, as planned, because his partner has just had a baby. "Are you sure?" Elder responds.

On another occasion, he mistakes a dabchick for an absurdly rare Slavonian grebe. Well, we've all done it: I once identified some shearwaters as storm petrels while helping other punters with their seabird spotting during a trip round the Hebrides. The difference is not all of us have owned up to it (until now).

James Fair, *BBC Wildlife Magazine* environment editor



### BOOK BIRDS: A PORTRAIT IN PICTURES AND WORDS

CHARLOTTE FRASER SUMMERSDALE, £12.99 ISBN 978 1849536752



"From troubles of the world I turn to ducks,
Beautiful comical things,
Sleeping or curled,
Their heads
beneath white

wings," writes FW Harvey, as opposite sits a brilliantly coloured Mandarin duck. And so this delightful little book goes, with pithy and poetic quotes from literary figures balanced against a striking image of different birds.

Thus, a chaffinch flies towards Victor Hugo's musing that "every bird which flies has the thread of the infinite in its claw", while a swallow with a full beak perches next to an extract from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Ode to the Swallow. Miguel de Cervantes urges us to "Never look for birds of this year in the nests of the last" as a jay gazes sagely on, while on another page a glorious snowy owl glides, yellow eyes fixed on the camera, as Isaac Asimov remarks that "Surely no child, and few adults, has ever watched a bird in flight without envy."

A pretty work of poetry, prose and pictures for avian appreciators.

Maria Hodson, production editor

### TV MODERN TIMES: THE GREAT BRITISH GARDEN WATCH BBC2. MAY

Jason is a man on a mission. His garden is fitted with cameras to record close-up footage of the wildlife that uses it, but one unwelcome visitor keeps appearing on the clips: a cat that's targeting young birds in the nest. To prevent any further predatory pounces, Jason has decided to kip outside in a tent. That way, he may yet get to see footage of fledglings taking to the wing.

Jason isn't alone in turning his garden into a film set. As director Lucy Cohen's delightful documentary reveals, Britons around the country are rigging outside spaces with cameras to capture footage of birds, foxes, hedgehogs, amphibians and rodents, often sharing what they record via social media. As to why they do this, that's perhaps the real subject being examined here, as the film gently and sensitively explores what motivates these amateur Attenboroughs.

Jonathan Wright, TV reviewer

96



### BOOK **HOW TO JUG A HARE**

SARAH RAINEY, BEE WILSON AURUM PRESS, £15.90 ISBN 9781781314234



Timing. That's the key to the particular pleasure and power of food journalism, writes Bee Wilson in *How to Jug a Hare*. Picture it: on your

doorstep on a Sunday morning, among the debris of an autumn storm, there lies the paper with recipes for the windfall apples. And although timeliness comes with transience, and the relevance of certain recipes fade, this compendium of historical food journalism covering 160 years is as much about entertainment as instruction; a history as well as a handbook.

From wartime rationing to the advent of the microwave, earnest didacticism to Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's disquisition on biscuit dunking, *How to* 



Jug a Hare tracks our shifting relationship with food, with each other and with the French.

Domestic and international, reflective and aspirational, food makes a great barometer of change. How to Jug a Hare contains contributions from not only food writers, but novelists, politicians, Telegraph readers and 'A Matron', addressing matters ranging from the dinner-party concerns to the vital benefits of Marmite and even the composition of astronauts' lunchboxes. A welcome and timely addition to the blossoming genre of food history.

Josh Barry, chef and food writer

### BOOK **AT HAWTHORN TIME**

MELISSA HARRISON BLOOMSBURY £16.99 ISBN 978 1408859049



Modern pastorals are less about tranquil, beautiful rural idylls than the mess and struggle of contemporary living, especially as the old ways

of country life are becoming obsolete.

This is very much the case in Lodeshill, the hamlet setting for Melissa Harrison's new novel *At Hawthorn Time*. James Hirons, born in 1919, still remembers his days as a young farmhand fondly, unlike his grandson's generation, who would rather sit in offices than work the land. Not that farming is an easy option – one local farmer, drowning in debt, has recently committed suicide, and his farm is being sold piecemeal: animals, machinery, farmhouse and the land for development.

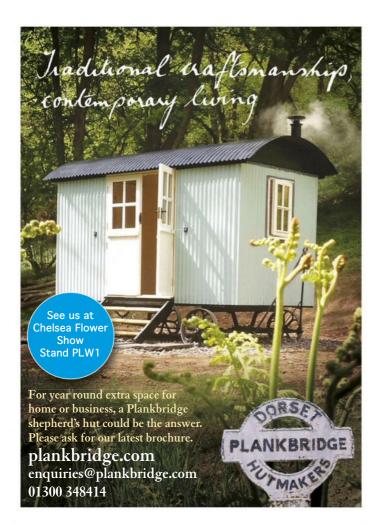
Howard and Kitty have recently retired here from London; a situation that might look enviable to the friends they have left behind, but the change of environment instead looks set to deepen the already extensive cracks in their marriage.

The only character truly at home among the hawthorn, cow parsley and dog's mercury is Jack, a vagrant farm-worker navigating by "a kind of telluric instinct, an obscure knowledge he had learned to call on even when the land he walked through was unfamiliar: the wind on his face; the pull of the water table deep beneath the ground; the change from chalk to greensand to lias under his feet". But his way of life is under threat, as it sits uncomfortably with the more settled lifestyles around him.

Set against a vividly drawn landscape, Harrison tells a story of people looking to belong, their lives colliding in unpredictable and tragic ways.

Lucy Scholes, literary reviewer

www.countryfile.com 97











# Farmhouse kitchen

A FAVOURITE SEASONAL RECIPE TO ENJOY THIS MONTH

### **BAKED GOOSEBERRIES WITH LEMON VERBENA ICE CREAM & FLAPJACK**

by Stephen Doherty, executive chef at the George and Dragon Inn, Clifton, Cumbria

### **INGREDIENTS**

For the lemon verbena ice cream Makes about 1.25 litres/2 pints

- Vanilla pod
- > 500ml/171/2fl oz milk
- > 100g/31/2oz granulated sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- > 10 fresh lemon verbena leaves
- finger length
- > 500ml/171/2fl oz double cream, chilled

#### For the flapjack

- > 375g/13oz unsalted butter
- > 100g/31/2oz light brown soft sugar
- 300ml/10fl oz golden syrup
- > 500g/1lb 1oz jumbo oats

### For the baked gooseberries

- > 75g/21/2oz unsalted butter
- > 100g/31/2oz soft brown sugar
- 500ml/171/2fl oz gooseberries
- Lemon juice, to taste
- Dry sherry or marsala, to taste

### To serve

Small fresh lemon verbena leaves to decorate

Serves 6

For the lemon verbena ice cream, split the vanilla pod in half lengthways and scrape out the seeds. Combine the milk, vanilla seeds and pod and half the sugar in a large saucepan and bring to just below boiling point. Remove the pan from the heat, cover and leave for at least 15 minutes to allow the vanilla flavour to develop.

Meanwhile, in a large heatproof bowl, beat the egg yolks into the remaining sugar until the mixture is thick and pale. Bring the milk back to boiling point, then pour it on to the egg yolks and sugar, whisking steadily. Place the bowl over a saucepan of simmering water and stir the custard with a wooden spoon until it thickens; this takes 5-30 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, add the lemon verbena leaves and plunge the base in a few centimetres of cold water. Leave to cool (stir occasionally) until the mixture feels as if it has never been heated. Transfer the custard to a jug, leaving the vanilla bean in. Cover and chill.

When ready, strain the custard. Pour the custard and chilled cream into the icecream machine and churn until it is the consistency of softly whipped cream. Scrape into freezer boxes, level and cover with greaseproof paper and a lid. Freeze overnight. Allow 15-20 minutes in the refrigerator before serving.

For the flapjack, preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Line a baking sheet of 25 x 38cm (10 x 15in) with greaseproof paper. In a heavy-based saucepan, add the butter, sugar and syrup and bring to the boil. Add the oats and mix thoroughly. Pour into the tray and spread the mixture evenly. Bake in the oven for 20–25 minutes or until golden. Remove from the oven and allow to cool before tipping out, peeling off the paper and cutting into the desired size.





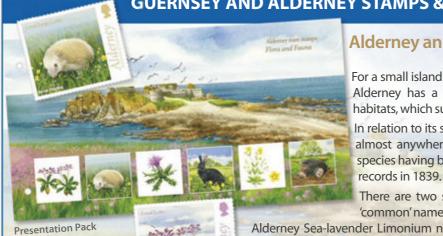
Recipe from Kitchen Garden Experts by Cinead McTernan (Frances Lincoln, £20), which is packed with tips and recipes from chefs who grow their own food.

For the baked gooseberries, heat the butter in a nonstick saucepan. When it is bubbling, add the sugar and gooseberries, turn up the heat and cook for two minutes until the butter and sugar have turned golden. Turn the heat down, add the lemon juice and sherry and cook for a further two minutes. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

To serve, spoon the gooseberries into a small dish. Dollop ice cream in a glass and decorate with freshly picked, small lemon verbena leaves. Serve the flapjack, cut into fingers, on the side.

Go online for more seasonal treats
For foraging guides, recipes, homemade
bread and other delights: www.countryfile.com/
countryside/seasonal-food

### **GUERNSEY AND ALDERNEY STAMPS & COLLECTABLES**



### Alderney an island rich in flora and fauna.

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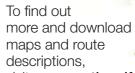




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# **Matt Baker**

THE COUNTRYFILE PRESENTER GOES BEHIND
THE SCENES ON HIS SHOWS AND FAMILY FARM

### **NO BUSINESS LIKE COUNTRY-SHOW BUSINESS**

Watch Matt and the team on Countryfile every Sunday evening on BBC One. Growing up, every year without fail we would head to the Great Yorkshire Show. It was a highlight of the year and that feeling of excitement has stayed with me all my life.

### **GREEN MAN. RED ROSETTE**

My first memory of a country show, however, is not agricultural at all. It's of sitting on the kitchen table, being painted green for my appearance as the Incredible Hulk in the fancy-dress contest. I remember feeling on top of the world as I wandered around the show with my first-place red rosette proudly pinned to my torn shirt.

Country shows are something we often visit as a family. I love the buzz of the live demonstrations of the exhibitors' year of hard work and preparation, the sight of all the coloured flags blowing in the breeze, the sound of the muffled tinny tannoy and the rows of saddlery stalls – not to mention the opportunity to sit in the latest farm machinery and work out what new implement is for what job.

Country shows have certainly evolved over time. Their original purpose was simply to let the farmers and growers show each other what they are capable of in the farming year by displaying their produce – while having a well-earned day off. These days the shows are all about 'the country lifestyle', breaking down the barriers between town and country

Fantastic fury: little Matt in his Incredible Hulk costume, for which he won first prize. folk and acting as a magnet to welcome everyone into the green stuff. This is where I see similarities between the shows and *Countryfile* – both offer an eclectic mix of all sorts going on, brought together in one place.

### **LUMBERJACK OF ALL TRADES**

Over the years, both on and away from *Countryfile*, I've been involved in many facets of country shows and my experiences are a good example of what will be on offer this summer. In my time, I have halter trained rams to show in the ring, raced to the top of a tree trunk in a lumberjack tree-climbing competition, taken the reins carriage-racing and driven vintage steam engines. I've flown birds of prey in falconry displays and judged sheep and cattle at the Royal Welsh Show.

But in front of this entertaining backdrop, don't underestimate the importance of those red first-prize cards and rosettes, displayed in the animal section, and what they mean to the pride and – crucially – businesses of the top breeders in the county. A country show is like a farmer's shop window, where they are honoured for their skill. This recognition of what they have produced within their breed is a big deal.

For me, these days I have empathy with the livestock on show. Because by being "that bloke off the telly", I know what it feels like to be one of the exhibits!

### **DON'T MISS ON COUNTRYFILE:**

**10 May** *Countryfile*'s Farming Heroes Award 2015 is announced, and is celebrated with a farming-themed programme

17 May Presented by Anita Rani, this compilation episode examines the places where country meets town, using archive footage and filming along the Spen Valley cycle route outside Bradford.

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# Your countryside

HAVE YOUR SAY ON RURAL ISSUES

### Share your views and opinions by writing to us at:

Have your say, BBC Countryfile Magazine, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN; or email editor@countryfile.com, Tweet us @CountryfileMag or via Facebook www.facebook.com/countryfilemagazine

\*We reserve the right to edit correspondence.



#### **GAMEKEEPERS BENEFIT BIRDS**

Why don't you mention shooting and how it benefits the countryside more often? Countryfile's episode on farmland birds in February was very informative but it failed to mention that gamekeepers feed wild birds throughout the year through food put out for game birds. The show mentioned that the grey partridge (above) is on the decline due to modern farming, but failed to say that, because gamekeepers are releasing grey partridges, this is helping stabilise the decline. Shooting does help maintain many wild birds.

#### Philip Bowes, Cardiff

### **LOCAL BUSES**

I applaud the initiative of Steve Hurst with his formation of Spirit Buses as reported by John Craven in Countryfile News (March). Our village Winford and neighbouring village Felton have recently lost their daytime bus services. Those of us lucky enough to afford our own transport have no alternative but to drive in. But others - such as the elderly, with outpatients appointments in Bristol hospitals - are virtually stranded and thereby losing their independence. This is

### **DOG POOLUTION**

I wish Countryfile would promote a campaign to stop people hanging bags of dog poo up on trees in the countryside. It is a problem everywhere and it's utterly moronic! The most ridiculous thing is that I find these bags in really remote places so they are clearly left by people who enjoy being in the country. It makes no sense. It is far more environmentally friendly not to pick up after dogs than to leave plastic bags all over the place.

**Melinda Hawtin** Goodworth Clatford, Hampshire

Editor Fergus Collins replies: It's an issue that offends many readers and me too. These bags are hung often

at a child's head height, ruining walks and polluting the countryside. It's something the dog-walking community needs to address urgently, as it would be a shame to see dogs denied access to nature reserves and communal spaces. The National Trust promotes the 'stick and flick' method at many of its sites.

### THE PRIZE

Our winner receives this great bundle of outdoor essentials, courtesy of Primus, including a four-season mug, wide-mouth drinking bottle, meal set and 0.75 litre vacuum flask. Primus, the Swedish outdoor cooking brand, has been engineering quality outdoor cooking stoves and products since 1892. Look out for their cutting edge new Lite+ range of one-person stoves in five rustic colours due to launch this spring. Visit: primus.se

yet another erosion of the quality of life in rural Britain. If we are to reduce our carbon footprint, we must have an integrated public traffic system and use it.

### **Brian Hawkins** Winford.Bristol

### **POISON IVY**

I disagree with Phil Gates when he says, in the February issue, that ivy does minimal damage. It will bring trees and hedges down. We have

all the evidence around us. Our hedges have to be treated every year to save them by cutting the ivy back to the ground. When in walls, it gets into cracks and expands, bringing the walls down as well.

Marie Webb, Wales

### **HEDGE OF REASON**

I read Barry Coyle's letter in the May issue and have seen the same decimation of our hedgerows in north Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey. In some cases, the



### Reader Q & A

66 How can the consumer opt to pay more for milk and ensure this goes to the farmer, not the supermarket? Many consumers would willingly pay more than the ridiculously low price at which we find milk in any supermarket. I buy eggs from a local farmer and receive a vegetable box or buy locally. That is not possible with milk. 99

Susan Crossley, Romsey, Hampshire

### Tim Relf from Farmers Weekly replies:

Your concern is shared by many. Research by DairyCo, a not-for-profit organisation working on behalf of Britain's dairy farmers, suggests that four out of five consumers would pay more for milk, were farmers to get this additional money. The difficulty is that the market is complicated (farmers don't sell milk directly to supermarkets, it goes via processors), so it's hard to work out who gets what. However, shoppers can help by buying British and asking their retailer what it does to back this country's dairy farmers.

hedge has been taken down to virtual stumps. This has happened to almost every hedge, both along the lanes and between fields far from any roads.

I would be interested to hear why this is happening, as we are told that farmers are more aware of the benefits of encouraging wildlife diversity and protecting pollinators.

### Caroline Stelling Basingstoke, Hampshire

**CORRECTION:** The Friends of Blencathra (FoB) would like to correct reports in the press and in John Craven's column (May issue) that it has failed in its bid to buy the Lake District mountain from the Lonsdale Estate. Debbie



Cosgrove of FoB says "On 7 April we received confirmation that, following lengthy discussions, the Estate was 'in principle minded to accept our offer' and that they would like to 'in principle move to the next stage of the sale'. Our legal team has continued to engage with the Estate and we have reinvigorated our fundraising to deliver the mountain into the public ownership."





### Social media

What you've been saying on Facebook and Twitter

Tom Heap investigated off-road driving on *Countryfile* 12 April

- **David Harper:** The only way to appreciate the countryside is by walking, not tearing around in cars or on motorbikes.
- Tim Clark: How do you get to a national park? You drive there! Vehicles have rights and should not be banned.
- Dave Hutton: In this day and age, we should be questioning any driving for pleasure. Do yourself a favour and cycle or walk instead.
- **David Neal:** Why don't police use drones to spot illegal off-roaders?
- Ben Dolphin: Surprised motorised access on greenways is legal in England. It isn't in Scotland.
- Andrew Oliver: Green lanes are permissive ways, not footpaths. Banning vehicles could lead to a ban for everyone.

You've been out spotting spring flowers and getting ready to plant your Grow Wild seeds...

- **Sheila Fletcher:** Snakeshead fritillaries are coming into bloom in my garden just lovely!
- Anne Christine Bailey: So far I've spotted wood anemones, bluebells and dogs mercury.
- **Bosavern Community Farm:** We're planting Grow Wild seeds here last year they were gorgeous and attracted lots of bees.

104 www.countryfile.com



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# Travelling light

Feather-light kit makes country walks so much more fun. So what's the best way to keep the weight down? **Hanna Lindon** packs her bag with a full set of easy-to-carry items

Photography Steve Sayers

acking for a walk always used to be a compromise between comfort and common sense. Should you hit the trail weighed down by a mammoth rucksack, or brave the consequences of leaving out the extra layer and that rarely used first aid kit? A new wave of high-tech outdoor gear has taken the struggle out of travelling light – but keeping your pack weight to a minimum is still a subtle art.

Trawling the shops for a waterproof jacket that will squeeze into a golf ball-sized stuff-sack is just the start. If you want to go further and walk faster, in comfort, then every gram counts.

To start with, be ruthless with unnecessary kit. Swap multiple dry bags for a single rucksack liner; wear waterproof socks instead of packing an extra pair; and choose versatile clothing such as trousers with zip-off legs.

Heavy kit can often be exchanged for lighter equivalents. Why lug countless litres of water around when a packet of purification tablets does the same job? Modern phones will stand in for heavy cameras, and excess insulation may be ditched if the foreacast is good.

Finally, a compact stove and gas can weigh in at less than 300g, so dumping the sarnies in favour of a dehydrated meal might make sense. As an added bonus, you'll be able to brew up a sneaky cuppa whenever you start flagging.

The key to a lightweight approach is immaculate organisation. Cutting down on grams requires forward planning and a bit of bother – but when you're skipping uphill without a pack the size of a baby elephant, the effort will feel worthwhile.



**Hanna Lindon** is a freelance journalist who writes about walking, scrambling and general outdoor adventuring.













www.windboiler.eu 4. Abisko Hybrid Zip-Off Trousers, Fjallraven, £115. It's worth splashing out on these feather-light but durable convertible trousers, which count map-sized leg pockets among their plus points. 02392 528711, www.fjallraven. co.uk 5. Mountain 50 Combi-Stick, Lifesystems, £7.25. All-in-one factor 50 lip and face protection. 01666 575500, www. cotswoldoutdoor.com 6. Quest 4D boots, Salomon, £155. Combining the sturdiness of a walking boot with the support and lightweight comfort of a trail running shoe, these Gore-Tex boots need no breaking















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in and moulded quickly to even my wide, bunion-afflicted feet. O1276 404984, www.salomon.com **7. Solitaire**, Maglite, £21.99. This lipstick-sized flashlight will fit in a trouser pocket. O345 504 5353, www. halfords.com **8. Jona Jacket**, Mammut, £170. This Gore-Tex waterproof is beautifully cut and packs down to an apple-sized ball that weighs a mere 350g. The men's version is the Juho. O1625 508218, www. mammut.ch **9. Oasis Short Sleeve Crew**, Icebreaker, £60. Worn next to the skin, this merino T-shirt will wick sweat away from your body and stay stink-free on summer

days. 0800 6127 312, uk.icebreaker.com

10. Ultralight/ Watertight .5, Adventure

Medical Kits, £22.99. Contains everything you need to treat minor injuries, in a lightweight, waterproof shell. 01740 644024, www. ultralightoutdoorgear.co.uk 11. Micro

Waterproof Phone Case, Aquapac, £20.

Unlike a dry bag, you won't have to take your phone out of this waterproof case to make calls or use your GPS. 020 7738 4466, www.aquapac.net 12. Venture trouser,

North Face, £70. Made of waterproof HyVent, these are lighter and cheaper than Gore-Tex trousers. They may be less breathable,

but will keep legs dry in most conditions. 01539 822155, www.thenorthface.co.uk 13. Tempest 30, Osprey, £85. A perfectly sized women's pack that scores a 10 for comfort thanks to its foam hip belt, adjustable torso length and ventilated back panel. The only downside, for those who like simplicity, is the sheer number of customisable features. 01202 413920, www.ospreyeurope.com

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Lindon's expert guide at www.countryfile.com

# Country puzzles

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### **COUNTRYSIDE QUIZ** by Emily Clark and Maria Hodson

### 1) Which of the following is not a species of butterfly?

- a) Grizzled skipper
- b) Pearl-bordered fritillary
- C) Cauliflower white
- d) Swallowtail

### 2) What is the collective noun for a group of toads?

- ☐a) A croak
- ☐b) A clump
- ☐c) A stool
- ☐d) A knot

### 3) What do badgers predominantly eat?

- a) Earthworms
- ☐b) Humbugs
- ☐c) Spiders
- ☐d) Slugs



# 4) How long does a worker bee live in summer?

- a) 4 days
- □b) 14 days
- □c) 40 days
- d) 90 days

### 5) What does the word 'ungulate' mean?

- a) To move with a wave-like motion
- motion
- b) To leave a slimy trail
- c) To yawn widely
- d) A hoofed mammal

### 6) What is Britain's smallest bird of prey?

- a) Red kite
- b) Sparrowhawk
- c) Golden eagle
- d) Merlin

#### answers at bottom of opposite page

# 7) How many kilometres of road from Egypt to Britain had Romans built by the end of the Roman Empire?

- □a) 4,000
- □b) 14.000
- ac) 400,000
- d)1,400,000

# 8) In which county would you find the Devil's Beef Tub?

- a) Dumfries and Galloway
- ☐b) Angus
- C) Essex
- d) Derbyshire

### 9) Which June-blossoming flower is sometimes known as woodbine and goat's leaf?

- a) Goat's beard
- b) Rhododendron
- □c) June Whitfield
- d) Honeysuckle

### 10) Which English town was Casterbridge named after in Thomas Hardy's novel

### Mayor of Casterbridge?

- a) Bridgwater
- ☐b) Dorchester
- c) Winchester
- d) Casterbridge

# 11) Which of the following sea creatures doesn't have a brain?

- a) Octopus
- ☐b) Starfish
- ☐c) Squid
- d) Captain Pugwash

### 12) Which Roman goddess is often depicted with an owl that symbolises knowledge?

- a) Juno
- □b) Minerva
- C) Diana
- ☐d) Hedwig

# A

### WHERE IN BRITAIN? by Jonty Clark

Can you identify this well-known location?



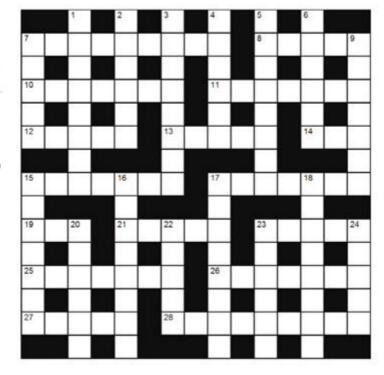
answer at bottom of opposite page

#### COUNTRYSIDE CROSSWORD

by Eddie James

#### **ACROSS**

- 7 Adam frets about a productive place in the country
- 8 Throw out ... ends of orange Goretex ripstop fleece, April! (5)
- 10 Dabbling ducks' song we disturbed around island (7)
- 11 He can be said to have laid the foundations for the Wallsend to Bowness-on-Solway LDP! (7)
- 12 Fermenting agent easy to change with time (5)
- 13 Edible mollusc changes more by river (5)
- 14 Precious stone from Ironbridge mine (3)
- 15 Scottish sheep dog "Heel, sit!" perhaps (7)
- 17 Female black grouse is briefly hot surrounded by wayward energy (4,3)
- 19 Manhandle a rabbit's foot. sav? (3)
- 21 Small, freshwater fish sounds coarse (5)
- 23 Push one's way rudely on the canal with this? (5)
- 25 A horse's 'nipper' made from iron (sic) (7)
- 26 'Rainy day' savings a cuckoo doesn't sit on? (4-3)
- 27 Honking big birds! (5)
- 28 Famous event held annually in Appleby - for a Shire, maybe (5,4)



#### **DOWN**

- 1 Kent home of National Fruit Collection right inside bog by valley (8)
- 2 Accompany Tresco tours?
- 3 Coast broadcasting a SOS here (8)
- 4 Hants, town on Three Castles Path relocated Idaho, beginning of month! (6)
- 5 Containing only cultivated plants, you and I had, it's said, to liberate (4-4)
- 6 Time of year for a natural source of water (6)
- **7** Cornish resort to be in debt between first and last of

#### February (5)

- **9** Pine chap's chalk figure on the Sussex Downs (4.3)
- **15** Young tree needs to drain heather (7)
- 16 Grain-husks separator working three hrs (8)
- 17 Foliage affecting, er, energy (8)
- 18 The man nearby upset this Kent resort (5.3)
- **20** Traditional hamper material I wreck, sadly (6)
- **22** Onward to a Scottish river?
- 23 Hound's low singing voice - alien! (6)
- 24 Composer associated with Malvern Hills, awfully regal (5)

#### CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

#### MAY

ACROSS 1 Spider 5 Catkins 9 Rainbow 10 Eroded 11 Grains 12 Hoe 13 Moth 14 Descend 16 Dinghy 18 Vermin 20 Cheddar 22 Spin 24 RHS 25 Screen 26 Gretna 27 Plateau 28 Hergest 29 Mutant

**DOWN 2** Partridge 3 Daisies 4 Rubus 5 Cowshed 6 The Needle 7 Iron man 8 Sweet 15 Ennerdale 17 Harlequin 19 Minster 20 Cesspit 21 Derwent 23 Perth 25 Swarm

#### APRII

ACROSS 1 Goat Fell 6 Godiva 9 Spur 10 Vodka 11/30 Well dressing 12 Neeps 13 Upstream 14 Statuary 16 Hogget 18 Inkpen 20 Game fish 22 Berneray 25 Hound 26 Urge 27 Sheer 28 Hive 29 Lynton

**DOWN 2** Orpington 3 Tarbert 4 Eaves 5 Ledbury 6 Goats 7 Dow Crag 8 Villa 15 Aln 16 Ham 17 East Devon 19 Pungent 20 Gwynedd 21 Flushes 23 Early 24 Resin 25 Horse



Online quiz Visit our website

for more puzzles www. countryfile.com/quiz

This magazine is published by Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited under

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES

UK/BFPO £54.60; Europe and Republic of Ireland £56; rest of world £58.





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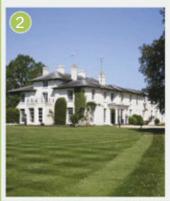
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# Summ

Twelve of the best ways to spend a day (or even a week) in the beautiful British countryside. Day adventures for all ages and the perfect places to stay and relax.

**WEST WALES HOLIDAY COTTAGES** West Wales

**CONGHAM HALL** 

**FARMER PALMER'S FARM PARK Dorset** 

**WEALD & DOWNLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM** West Sussex

**THOUSAND ISLANDS EXPEDITIONS** Ramsey Island **BLACK COUNTRY LIVING** MUSEUM Dudley, West Midlands

**CRICH TRAMWAY VILLAGE** Derbyshire

**NATURAL RETREATS** 

**ESTUARY COTTAGES** 

THE FORBIDDEN CORNER Coverham, North Yorkshire

Locations all over the UK

LIGHTWATER VALLEY Ripon, North Yorkshire

**ISLAND HOLIDAY COTTAGES** 

Isle of Wight & Isle of Purbeck

LIGHTWATER VALLEY

coaster.



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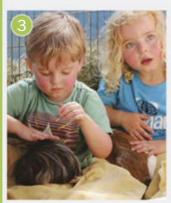
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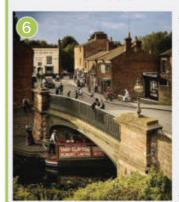
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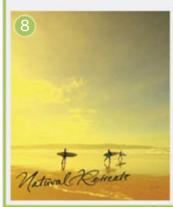
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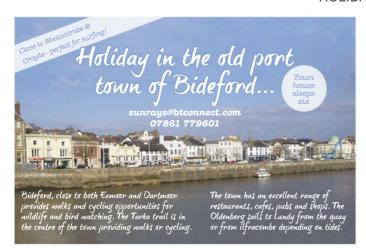


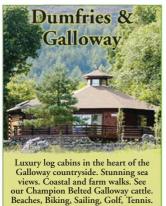
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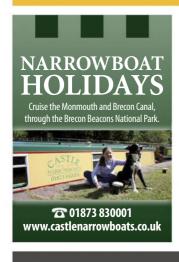


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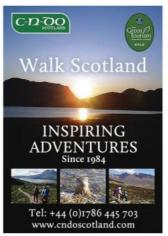
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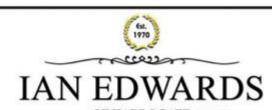
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## my countryside

## **Paul Rose**

The diver, explorer, polar expert and broadcaster discusses the Pennine Way, the great smell of sheep poo and why lessons should be taught outdoors

grew up in a council flat in
Romford and wild places seemed
out of reach. As a family we went to
the coast for holidays and spent
some weekend time in the Essex
countryside, but life felt claustrophobic.
I had an overwhelming desire to be
outside, which meant that from about
10 years old onwards, I dragged my
mattress onto the balcony and slept
there as often as I could.

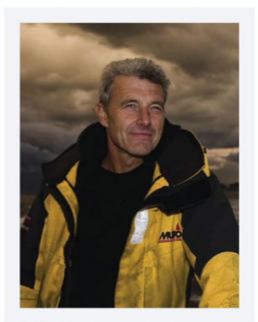
I hated school, I wanted to learn but just couldn't do it. There was probably no hope for me until the geography teacher took us to the Brecon Beacons on what I realise now was most likely a 'last chance' trip. I loved it. The most defining moment in my early life was sitting on the doorstep of the Merthyr Tydfil youth hostel, peeling spuds into a bucket after a long day in the hills, and realising that I had never felt so alive.

I live in the Lake District, and I enjoy the unique balance of accessibility and a feeling of the wildness. I especially enjoy arriving back into Oxenholme train station and being greeted by the welcoming smell of sheep poo as the doors open.

Everyone I know has walked the Pennine Way – it's like a rite of passage for people interested in the outdoors – but I had never done it. Then, out of the blue, the BBC called and asked if I would present a documentary in celebration of the 50th birthday of the Pennine Way. I didn't actually get to walk the whole Pennine Way for the series, but I'm hooked and later this year I will do the entire route.

When you go to wild places, the inner journey is a beautiful thing, too. It comes from stretching yourself and being tested – but that only comes if you get among it physically.

**UK waters offer some of the world's finest diving.** My first sea dive was at Chesil Cove on the Dorset coast and I try to dive there any



"Peeling spuds into a bucket after a long day in the hills, I realised I'd never felt so alive"

The Pennine Way, presented by Paul Rose, will air on BBC Two this summer and is available to view on BBC iPlayer.

chance I can. My ultimate diving hero as a kid was Mike Nelson, as played by Lloyd Bridges in the US drama Sea Hunt. Every week he was rescuing pilots from crashed jets, surviving underwater knife fights and all of the beautiful women in the world wanted Mike to teach them to dive!

The rural issue that most annoys me is building new homes and businesses on good land while there are so many vacant urban and brown-field sites. We live on a small, overpopulated island and if we are not careful we could lose our countryside to opportunistic developers.

#### To improve country life, we need more people to get out and enjoy it.

Let's create a true countryside constituency. If I were prime minister, one of the first things I would do would be to sign into law an educational system that 50% of all school lessons had to be conducted outside. I would also insist on lessons for scuba diving, rock climbing, canoeing, sailing and skiing.

#### My rural hero is the Scottish-American conservationist John Muir [1838-1914].

As a teenager I was heavily influenced by him. He could write what I was feeling. The John Muir Trust is doing good work and it feels very much in the spirit of the great man himself.

One of my most memorable, and saddest, wildlife encounters was finding an injured roe deer in Longsleddale. It had been hit by a car. We had to put it out of its misery, but how? With no weapons, there was nothing we could do so we carried the creature back to my friend's barn, telephoned the RSPCA and sat on the floor with the deer. A couple of hours later the RSPCA duty officer arrived, gave the deer a merciful injection and took her away. We remained on the floor, burst into tears and opened a bottle of whisky. More happily, I've fallen asleep in a meadow to the sound of bees and skylarks, and the feel of a gentle breeze.





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